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ILLINOIS AS LINCOLN  
KNEW IT : A Boston Reporter's Record .  
(1847 / 1938)



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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY





# ILLINOIS AS LINCOLN KNEW IT

A Boston Reporter's Record  
of a Trip in 1847

*Edited by*  
HARRY E. PRATT

Reprinted from *Papers in Illinois History and Transactions*  
for the Year 1937, for Members of the  
Abraham Lincoln Association.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS  
1938



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1207 S. Race St.

Urbana, Ill.

Oct 6, 1938.





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Illinois Historical Survey

# ILLINOIS AS LINCOLN KNEW IT

## A BOSTON REPORTER'S RECORD OF A TRIP IN 1847

*Edited by* HARRY E. PRATT

### INTRODUCTION

J. H. Buckingham, son of the founder and publisher of the *Boston Courier*, came to Chicago in July, 1847, as a delegate to the River and Harbor Convention and as a reporter for his father's paper. That Convention, which Horace Greeley said was the largest meeting ever held in America up to that time, convened on July 5 and adjourned two days later. Its purpose was to register a protest against President Polk's veto of a bill making appropriations for river and harbor improvement, and to strengthen the general cause of internal improvements by federal action. Chicago was an appropriate meeting place, because Polk's veto had deprived it of an anticipated \$8,000 for the harbor improvement which had been in progress since 1833.

One of the Illinois delegates to the Convention was Abraham Lincoln, who had been elected to the national House of Representatives the preceding year but had not yet taken his seat. So far as is known, this was Lincoln's first visit to the Illinois metropolis. Buckingham made no mention of Lincoln's short speech before the Convention, but when they became fellow passengers on the stage between Peoria and Springfield a few days later, he was greatly amused by the Whig Congressman and described his antics in several of the most interesting passages of this narrative.

Buckingham was fascinated by Chicago and the West, and decided to proceed to St. Louis. His route took him by stage and steamer through Peru, Peoria, Springfield, Jacksonville and Alton.

Returning, he traveled up the Mississippi to Galena, stopping for a day at Nauvoo. His description of the famous Mormon Temple is one of the most detailed on record. From Galena, he followed the lower route through Dixon to Chicago.

Buckingham's letters to the *Courier*, which appeared at intervals in July and August, 1847, are first-rate travel literature. But they have a broader interest than most travel literature, for the state which they describe so accurately and vividly was the Illinois of Lincoln's time. Here are the towns as he saw them, the inns in which he slept, the people whom he knew—and, for good measure, a pencil sketch of Lincoln himself.

## CORRESPONDENCE OF THE COURIER

CHICAGO

July 5, 1847

This city, with a permanent population of nearly twenty thousand inhabitants, is, to-day, occupied by at least forty thousand. It is a beautiful place, the most beautiful, at first sight, of any I have seen since I left New-England. Its streets are broad and long, and all lined with trees. It is bordered by the Chicago or Skunk River and Lake Michigan, and by a ten-mile prairie. The prevalent winds are from the North, blowing over the lake, and they keep everything healthy.

To-day, the great, long-talked of, and very important River and Harbor Convention, met in this place, and this fact, with the additional fact that the day was set apart for the celebration of our National Independence, has caused a great crowd. All the hotels,—and Western towns and cities, are famous for the number,—if not for the excellence of their hotels and taverns, have been full to overflowing for more than a week. I arrived here yesterday morning, in five days from Buffalo, in the steamer *Baltic*,<sup>1</sup> with two hundred and fifty passengers, but no hotel

<sup>1</sup> The *Baltic*, Capt. A. T. Kingman in charge, had left Buffalo, New York, for Chicago on June 29, 1847; it remained there until July 8. It was an 825 ton steamer, launched in Buffalo earlier in the same year. It was 221 feet in length, and had a 30 foot beam, with a 12 foot depth of hull.

accommodations could be had that were comfortable, and we all, men, women and children, remain on board the boat, by invitation of Captain Kingman, who keeps temporarily a hotel for our accommodation. Five other large steamers are lying in the river with their passengers also on board, and in the same situation. The citizens have been very liberal, and have put themselves to great expense and inconvenience to accommodate strangers;—every private house where there is a spare bed, has been freely offered to the strangers who are here, and I understand that all the houses are full. I have just declined an invitation to a spare mattress on the floor of the office of a lawyer in Lake street, because I am well accommodated on board the *Baltic*, and have no doubt some stray stranger will be glad of it before bedtime.

At early dawn to-day, or rather at early dark last evening, crackers, and squibs, and guns “begun to be fired,” and they have been “being fired” for at least twenty-four hours. I miss the merry sound of the bells which are used to usher in our sunrise, noon and sunset, on such occasions in Boston; but in other respects the celebration of the day has been much as such celebrations are wont to be all the world over.

The procession was formed at nine o’clock, and escorted by a company of Light Artillery. Our Boston boys would have laughed to see the guns, which were longer and heavier than a majority of the volunteer militia of Massachusetts would be able to handle if they should try. But they looked as if made for service, and the men who carried them looked as if they were capable of doing service with them; there were no boys in this company, or if there were, they were boys with beards, and hard heads, and hard frames.

Next followed the Fire Department, and a more tasteful, and in fact a handsomer show was never got up in the Eastern country. The Chief Engineer is a Boston Boy, and he has Boston tastes, much improved, and with views enlarged to suit the boundaries of this noble Western World. He got up the

procession, or his part of it, in a manner that would do credit to any body. The engines were mounted on cars and drawn by six and eight horses; the members of the different companies were dressed in appropriate costume, and a band of music accompanied each. The wheels and the brakes were garlanded with flowers, and while one was covered with a bower, another was covered with an open tent, and all had some appropriate decoration.

Next followed the Illinoisans, marching by counties, with banners,—Long John Wentworth, seven feet in height, being in the front rank.<sup>2</sup> The Massachusetts delegation was formed at the head of the column of foreign delegates, and were twenty-eight in number. Then came the delegates from other states. After marching some distance, the escort opened to the right and left, and the foreign delegates passed into a large pavilion, followed by the rest of the procession, so far as was practicable. This pavilion was said to be calculated to seat three thousand people, and half the number of persons who were in the procession could not get seats. The Mayor<sup>3</sup> of the city, in a brief address, gave us a welcome; and the Executive Committee, who have had the arrangement, the getting up of the Convention, then came forward and proposed Col. Barton of Buffalo as President *pro tem.*, and two gentlemen from the farther West as Secretaries. This being agreed to, we had prayer, and then the Committee proposed a plan of proceeding that was calculated to facilitate the operations of the Convention. After some preliminary discussion as to the details of business, the Convention adjourned until afternoon.

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<sup>2</sup> John Wentworth, 1815-1888. He was born in New Hampshire, and was a graduate of Dartmouth College; he came to Chicago in 1836 and within a month had become editor of the *Chicago Democrat*. From 1839 to 1861, he was its sole owner, editor and publisher. He was admitted to the bar in 1841; member of Congress from 1843 to 1851, 1853 to 1855 and 1865 to 1867; and mayor of Chicago from 1857 to 1863. In public, as in private life, his motto was "Liberty and Economy." He was influential in bringing the River and Harbor Convention to Chicago. Wentworth was a striking figure, being six feet, seven inches in height, and weighing some three hundred pounds.

<sup>3</sup> James Curtiss, a Democrat, was elected mayor on March 2, 1847.



Among the arrangements of the morning was one, that in disputed votes, each delegation should be entitled to vote in states, and each delegation should choose a person to cast the votes. Another was, that each delegation should elect a person to act for it, and that the persons so elected should compose a committee to nominate officers for the Convention, and to make rules and orders and other arrangements to be observed. We chose B. B. Mussey of Boston as chairman, and authorized him to vote for the Massachusetts delegation. We chose Artemas Lee of Templeton as member of the nominating committee, and also elected a Secretary.

The Convention then adjourned until four o'clock. This afternoon the nominating committee are in session, and at the time I am writing, six o'clock, have not agreed upon their report. In the mean time, the Convention itself is in session under its temporary organization, and speeches have been made by several gentlemen. I was not able, without too much trouble, to penetrate the mass, and so have not heard the talk of this afternoon; but I heard enough from Mr. Corwin of Ohio to be satisfied that he is for political action, and disposed to make political capital out of this Convention.

People are here from all parties, but I cannot disguise the fact that the majority appear to be Whigs. They talk Whig, and they don't pretend to be any thing else than Whigs. What will be the effect, time will tell; but the West is aroused and will assert its right to a share of the public plunder—will have appropriations for the improvement of its lakes and rivers, let who will be President.

P. S. Since the foregoing was written, the committee has reported a list of officers, Judge Bates of Missouri being President,<sup>4</sup> and each state having a Vice-President; William T. Eustis of Boston is one of the latter. When the report was made, a

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<sup>4</sup> Edward Bates, 1793-1869, was born in Virginia; he moved to St. Louis in 1814. He was a Representative in the Twentieth Congress and presided over the National Whig Convention in 1856; a leading candidate for presidential nomination in 1860; Attorney General of the United States, 1861-1864.

member of the committee stated that the minority of the same was in favor of Thomas Corwin of Ohio for President of the Convention, and proposed his name in opposition to the name reported; but Mr. Corwin declined, and the Convention, as I think they would have done without his declination, voted down the proposition at once.

The mail is about to close, and I will write you more for to-morrow.

CHICAGO

July 6, 1847

In my hurried letter of yesterday, I could not give you one hundredth of the actual information with which I am burthened respecting this place, and the convention which is now in session. For particulars of the latter, I must refer to the newspapers, for without taking a reporter's desk on the platform, and working all the time, it would be impossible to give any thing like even a sketch of what is doing.

There are men here who have come to make party capital, and there are men here who have come with a single eye to the professed objects of the gathering. But the majority is of the latter class, and the politicians find themselves trammelled, or if not trammelled, find that the leading sentiment is in opposition to all the professed Democratic doctrines of Mr. President Polk and his predecessors. The consequence is that while Whiggery, if I may use such a word, is predominant, the Locofocos feel a little uneasy, talk of their disgust at the "management," which they see so clearly, and try to mar where they cannot make.

Clergymen, of all other classes of men, are the most unfit to be sent on political missions, and if they have not discretion enough to stay at home of their own accord, their friends and neighbors ought not to make other people suffer by sending them into conventions, where they are entirely out of place. New-England stands high in the estimation of the Western people, but yesterday she was rendered ridiculous, if not contemptible, by the intrusion of a clergyman, before the thousands of people



assembled, with a *written* speech of adulation and praise for the Puritan fathers and their descendants. I am ready to render all due credit to the gentleman who placed New-England, and in particular the Massachusetts delegation, in such a mortifying position, for his honesty of purpose, and for his good intentions, but I cannot but regret, in common with others, that he did not keep his sermon for ears that could better tolerate self-glorification. When he concluded, Mr. Corwin of Ohio was called for, and the withering sarcasm with which that gentleman politely agreed to all the fulsome twaddle of the Rev. Mr. Allen, was enough to have killed any one not wrapped up [in] self-conceit as with a coat of mail.

The greater part of the afternoon, yesterday, was spent in discussing some trifling matters of proceeding, and resulted in following the recommendations of the business committee. It was Mr. Charles King of the New-York *Courier* and *Enquirer*, who proposed to make Mr. Corwin the President of the Convention, and his movement was one injurious to any desire that he may have to increase his political or personal influence. Mr. Corwin's friends were much disappointed, and in proportion to their disappointment is their tone of complaint. They even talk of ill-usage, and intimate that Mr. Corwin expected the situation, in consequence of promises held out to him in advance. Mr. Corwin made an able speech yesterday afternoon, and was listened to with great attention.

To-day a committee of two from each state was appointed to draw up resolutions for consideration, and at half-past four o'clock they reported a long series, and much to the astonishment of every body the chairman stated that they had been agreed to unanimously. They are very strong, and were received with marks of favor, and were much applauded. When I left the tent, at five o'clock, Mr. J. C. Spencer of New-York was on the stand, explaining and advocating their passage. I see no reason now, why the convention should not close its deliberations to-morrow forenoon.

If I appear enthusiastic in my notices of the new world which has been opened to me, not only here, but in New-York state, I can offer no excuse, for I am filled with the wonders and the capacities of the West. A person living in Boston, and having experience of our hard soil, and the hard work which the people of Massachusetts have to undergo to produce even moderate crops knows nothing of what is to be opened to us by the extension of our railroad communications, without coming to see for himself. I consider that the Ogdensburg<sup>5</sup> Railroad is but joining us on to the string of western lakes, for it must be apparent to every one who looks at things as they are, that Boston is the natural market, on the Atlantic shore, for the whole country. New-York can never compete with us for this trade, to our injury, and while there must always be enough for both, we must, by force of natural circumstances, take the lion's share. It is incredible to me that we should so long have delayed building the road through Northern New-York, and it would be incredible to all our readers if I should show them what I know must be the immediate result of its being built at this present time. People are absolutely suffering for want of the accommodations which we are about to offer them by that line, and when we can say that the cars are in running order, we shall wonder how they have lived so long without it.

I saw to-day in the street casks of nails manufactured at Plattsburg, N. Y., which, on inquiry, I ascertained had arrived at this place after a long voyage down Lake Champlain, to Whitehall and Troy, thence through the Erie Canal to Buffalo, and then through the lakes to Chicago. Look at the map, and see how much of transportation would have been saved, if these nails could have come by railroad from Lake Champlain to Ogdensburg. As the newspapers say—comment is unnecessary.

Chicago is destined, some day hence, and no very far-off day neither, to be one of the largest cities in the Union; and the

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<sup>5</sup> Ogdensburg, New York, located on the St. Lawrence River, is the terminal of deep water navigation on the Great Lakes.

wisdom of its projectors, in laying out its wide streets, is every where apparent. The streets are all lined with trees, and the Acacia and Maple and Elm are abundant; the Acacia, in particular, grows very thrifty and beautiful. The soil, even in its worst places, after you go a few yards from the shore of the lake, is nothing but the richest garden earth to the depth of many feet, and its capacity for yielding produce is unfathomable.

The latitude of Chicago is about the same as that of Boston and the climate, as regards heat and cold, is about the same. The prevalent breezes are from the North, and blowing over the pure fresh water of Lake Michigan, are very healthy and invigorating.

To-day I stood in what is called the Old Fort, a spot occupied by barracks, with a square in the centre, the whole occupying not more space than the Common on Fort Hill, in Boston; and in that spot, in 1832, Gen. Scott collected for safety, and to protect them from the Indians, every inhabitant that lived within a circuit of thirty miles. In the space of that thirty miles, are now living nearly fifty thousand people! Twelve years ago, one hundred and fifty inhabitants was a large estimate for the census of Chicago, and to-day the residents are estimated at twenty thousand!<sup>6</sup>

A large proportion of the people of this city are of eastern origin, mostly from New-England, and one would hardly be aware in the intercourse with the town's people that he was not in a New-England village. But the persons who come into town from the country, and from other States, are strongly marked with the characteristics of the West. The procession of yesterday exhibited these hardy countenances and sturdy frames to great advantage, and if nothing else results from the Convention but a knowledge, by personal inspection, of the traits of character existing in each and all of the different classes of the East and the West, the North and the South, who are here assembled, enough

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<sup>6</sup> Chicago had a population of approximately thirty in 1829; in 1835 the census figure was 3,265, and by 1847 it had increased to 16,859.

will have been accomplished to pay for all the cost and labor of individuals, and of this community.

The weather is intensely hot, and the roads are dusty. Chicago has no stone, and consequently the streets are not paved. Every street, however, to the end of its settlement—for some of them run out for miles into the prairie, beyond where there are houses,—is accommodated with a wide wooden sidewalk, which is pleasant to walk on. The crossings, too, are generally accommodated with a plank foot path, which is very fortunate, as some times one might run the risk of getting lost by sinking into the rich and fruitful looking earth. The dust is not sand, and the mud is not clay, but it looks more like the soil of a hot-house garden bed, than like any thing else.

CHICAGO  
July 7, 1847

The Convention has adjourned, *sine die*, after passing the resolutions reported by the committee, voting thanks to the citizens of Chicago, and to the President, and listening to a long and eloquent speech from the President in reply. Judge Bates has acquitted himself during his term of office with great ability, and earned the respect of the thousands who have been in attendance. His speech this morning was singularly appropriate, modest, Christian and patriotic, and the three times three cheers with which he was saluted on concluding were well deserved. I must refer you to the Chicago papers for particulars of the proceedings, with the single remark that every thing has gone off harmoniously, and every body is now satisfied and pleased. The disaffections and the quibblings of a few Locofocos, to which I have before referred, appear to have been but the effervescence of a soda bottle, and better counsels, calmer judgment, soon settled all bickerings. I believe that now every body thinks that the Convention has done good, and I am satisfied, as I said yesterday, that the mere collection of so many people together, in this place, will be a national good, even if nothing results from our deliberations.

After the Convention adjourned, the mass went into committee of the whole, and we were entertained with speeches from different gentlemen from different places. You never saw so happy a multitude, nor so uproariously orderly and determinedly happy a set of men. They called for one after another of the prominent men known to be present, and would take no excuse; Western men wanted speeches, and speeches they would have at any rate. Among the rest, our friend Burlingame<sup>7</sup> was loudly called for, and the Badgers of Wisconsin, and the Wolverines of Illinois, would not be put off. He tried to turn them over to another gentleman of the Massachusetts delegation, but they would not be turned over to any body. They told him he must speak first, and they would hear his friend afterwards. He spoke for a few minutes in his usual eloquent manner, and his speech was received with great attention and most loudly applauded. He then introduced E. H. Allen of Boston, who made a short speech, which was well received, although it did not attract the attention it deserved. It is always unfortunate for a stranger to follow a known and popular speaker, and Burlingame is so well known to the boys of the West, that they were not attentive to any one else for some time.

All day, forenoon and afternoon, the tent has been full, and one after another has been made to mount the stage and air his vocabulary for a while. The day winds up with a bright sky, a burning heat, and lots of fun of all kinds. An old-fashioned country muster never exhibited any thing to be compared to the scenes of the last three days, and nowhere else could such an occasion pass off so well and so noisily, so rowdyish and so good-naturedly, as here in the West.

The more I see of Chicago, the more I am impressed with the value of its increasing trade with Boston,—for Boston is the Atlantic sea-port of this great country. Everywhere one meets with something new to astonish and delight him, and the only

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<sup>7</sup> Anson Burlingame of Boston, who later became the celebrated American minister to China.



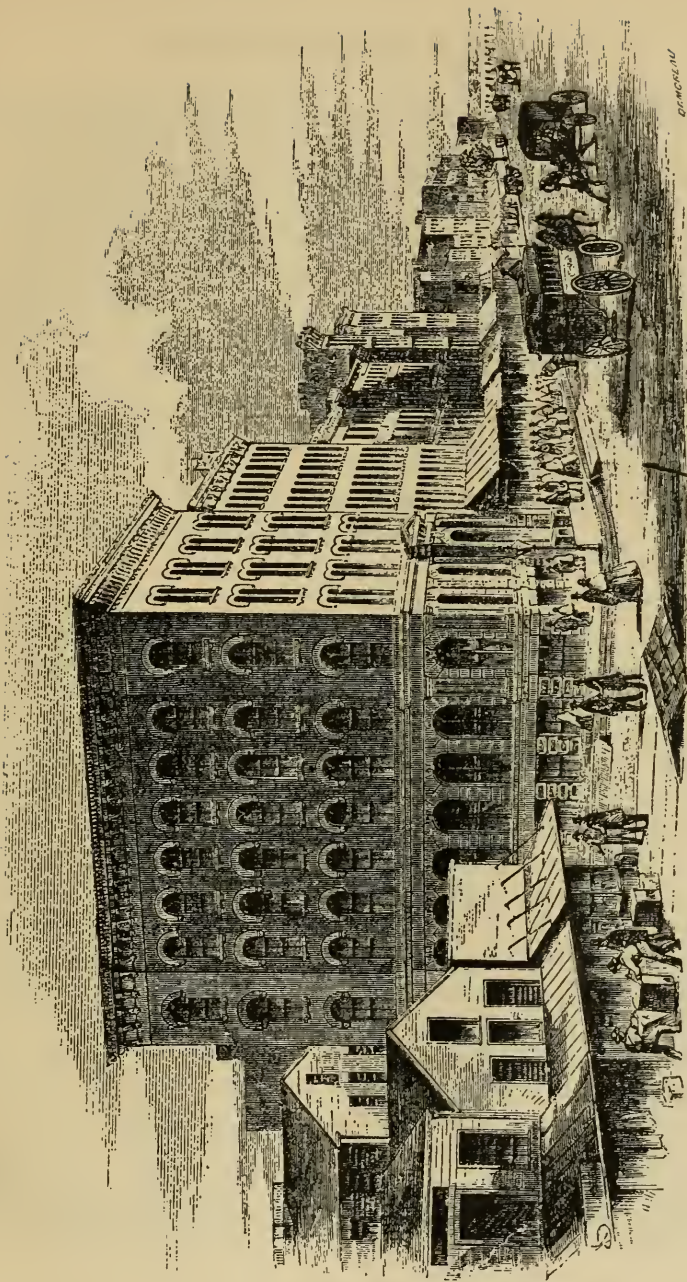
wonder soon gets to be, that we have not sooner made efforts to secure it all to ourselves. To-day I have had a ride on the prairie, and although new to me, I was coolly told that I had seen nothing at all. The flowers growing wildly beautiful, the roads running through miles and miles of unfenced grounds rich with soft black loam, the young trees growing thriftily and luxuriantly, the tall grass,—all, I am told, are nothing. Well, we shall see in a few days, for I am off, to-morrow, for the interior of the state, where I am to find “something” worth looking at.

I could write columns about Chicago, and give statistics upon statistics, to show that it is the greatest place of its age, and is destined to be still greater; but *cui bono*? You would not believe half I should tell you, and instead of writing notes from a plain diary, I should be set down as a romancer. This is a great place for the pork trade, in which article it is destined to rival Cincinnati, and its beef is said to be the finest in the world. Our steamer is now taking on board, as freight, two hundred casks—hogsheads of hams, which are to go through the lakes and the Erie Canal to Troy, and perhaps to Boston. Hundreds of barrels of beef and pork are also going on board, all bound East. Even at this season of the year the store-houses are filled with produce, and I this morning went into one where there were stored twenty-eight thousand barrels of wheat.

On one side of the river is the Lake House,<sup>8</sup> which was built in the “times of expansion,” as they are called, of 1836 or 1837, for a public house. It is well kept, well furnished, and very comfortable. In its vicinity and for some distance around, are scattered numbers of elegant private dwellings, surrounded by gardens, and the streets are all wide and regularly laid out. One street on this side skirts the river shore, and has on it a few warehouses, and a large number of retail shops, mostly occupied by foreigners,—Dutch and Irish. On the other side of the river is now the principal business, and Lake-street is filled with retail stores of as much beauty of

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<sup>8</sup> The construction of the Lake House was begun in 1835 and completed during the following year.



LAKE STREET, CHICAGO, ABOUT 1852

arrangement, and with as valuable stocks of goods, as can be found in any city in America. In fact, Chicago is now, with its present population, as much of a business place as I know of, after our own city. Hundreds upon hundreds of wagons are in its streets, drawn by the finest horses in the world, and laden with every sort of commodity. In the fall of the year they have their wheat brought into the city from the country in immense wagons, called prairie schooners, which hold two hundred bushels at a time, and these may be seen stringing out through the roads for miles and miles.

This is a great place for the lumber trade, although no lumber grows in this neighborhood. The boards, &c., are brought from the Sault St. Marie and Lake Superior, in different kinds of vessels, and stored in the lumber yards, to be transported by wagons into the country. A canal is about being built which will soon afford great facilities for internal transportation.

One of the principal features in the procession of Monday, was the appearance of the fire department, and I have made many inquiries concerning its composition. It consists of four hundred men, all volunteers, and they all pay their own expenses and the expense of their machines and decorations. The chief engineer is Mr. Gale,<sup>9</sup> a gentleman who served his apprenticeship with Hiliard, Gray & Co. in Boston. There are four engines, to which are attached sixty men each, and a hook and ladder, and a hose company. The department is limited in number, and none but the best and finest young men in the city are admitted into its ranks.

The military escort for Monday's procession was a company of volunteer flying artillery, who came from Cleveland, Ohio, bringing their horses, cannons, &c,—a hardy set of men, who certainly must have felt much patriotism and great interest in the objects of the Convention, to come so far and at such an expense of time and money. To-day I saw them manoeuvre, going through the different evolutions as practised by Bragg's and Ringgold's troops,

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<sup>9</sup> Stephen F. Gale served as chief of the fire department from 1844 to 1847. He was the first president of the Fireman's Benevolent Association, and a member of the first Board of Directors of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.



which we have all heard so much of. They certainly went through with their exercises with a rapidity that was astonishing.

The drays used here are the short drays in the New York style, but they are drawn by good horses. In fact I have not seen a poor-looking horse in the place. The pleasure carriages, of which there are an extra number for a place of this size, are of the most approved Eastern city style, and drawn invariably by such horses as would make envious our gentlemen and ladies of taste in Boston, where we generally have better carriage horses than they have in other places.

The city is beginning to grow thinner, and the steamboats that left last night and to-day have gone crowded with passengers. But even in its desolation from the mob, it is a populous place, and the streets are filled with people who go about for pleasure and business.

#### CHICAGO

July.

History tells that many years ago, I believe in 1812, serious fears being entertained that the Indians would destroy the small party then resident at this place, the commanding officer concluded to move away, and join a larger party at Fort Wayne. Previous to going he destroyed all the stores on hand that he could not carry, and particularly all the spirit. The Indians were very much incensed, after his departure, that they could not find the rum, and took to drinking the water of the river, into which the rum had been poured, pronouncing it to be "very good grog." They could see for themselves that the waters of the river, and the lake into which it empties, do not amalgamate at once, and they may have thought that the rum remained. However that may be, it is very apparent that the waters remain of different color and of different taste, to this day. Chicago is so low that there is no good water for drinking, except that which is brought from the lake, and the latter is very pure and wholesome; it is easily procured, and furnishes the drink for the inhabitants; the former, which is brown and muddy, is extensively used for washing, and for other ordinary domestic purposes.

Our friend Degrand some years ago called the Worcester depot in Boston the end of "Worcester Longwharf." I know no reason why I should not christen the Fitchburg depot the "Chicago Long wharf," for by whatever channel of communication the trade from Ogdensburg reaches Boston,—whether by the Vermont Central or the Rutland route—it must all go to Boston, or most of it by the way of Fitchburg. The directors are in duty bound to make me and my family free passengers for the rest of our lives, for giving them so good and appropriate a name. Any one who looks at the map, and every one who comes out here and sees the business that is transacted on the lakes and in this part of the Western country, must be convinced that all this trade must go to Boston. A gentleman who is extensively engaged on the Fox river, thirty miles from this place, tells me that now, round-about as it is, he sends all his supplies, even his New-Orleans sugar and molasses, from Boston,—now it comes through the Erie Canal; but when Ogdensburg Railroad is completed, it will come more directly, and at a saving of some hundreds of miles of transportation. Perhaps I have mentioned this latter circumstance before; but I write at great disadvantage, with no opportunity to revise and correct, and as the printers are by this time satisfied, with no conveniences for stationery. All I aim to do is to state facts, and if time and opportunity were given me, I could multiply my record of facts almost innumera- bly. Never yet did Yankee go out from home with a more inquisitive disposition than myself, and I never saw but one man, and he was an esteemed member of the original party with which I left Boston, that asked so many questions. I shall be very happy if I ever become half as valuable a member of society, and retain but half as much statistical knowledge, as he is noted for.

When our Massachusetts delegation assembled, on Monday morning, on board the steamboat *Louisiana*, for organization, there was a general feeling of regret as well as disappointment, that we had not one distinguished man among us, no capitalist, and no one whose name was known to the world. It was apparent that the Western people had expected to see some great man, and that

Massachusetts was looked to particularly for something that we could not supply. But we put up with the disappointment as best we could, and determined to do our duty. The selection of Messrs. Eustis, Lee and Hobart, for prominent candidates for the offices we might be called upon to fill, was well and judiciously made, and gave satisfaction. Now that the Convention is over, and we have mingled with the thousands of strangers assembled here, I am not only disposed to give up my regret at the absence of those to whom we had a right to look for countenance on this occasion, but also to be rather glad of the result. As I said before, much was expected of Massachusetts, and I doubt whether any delegation, from any part of the country, met with more consideration and respect than we did. Gentlemen were continually claiming introductions, and continually offering their hospitality, and proffering their services to make known to us what we most wanted to know, to show what we most wanted to see. If we had had with us a prominent man, he would have absorbed a great part, if not the whole, of the attention which was now disseminated among the twenty-eight members of the delegation; and although the state might have been more distinguished, I have strong doubt whether as much good would have been effected. We had with us men of sound sense, men of business, and men with dispositions to encourage and increase the general desire for greater intercourse between the East and the West. We shall find hereafter that the association of intelligent men from different sections of the country is of quite as much advantage as the notoriety of a political or very rich delegation.

The mass of strangers is now about separating, and although the hopes and the expectations of some may have been disappointed, there is the best feeling prevailing, the utmost satisfaction expressed by every body. Politics have been dropped, after an ineffectual attempt on the part of a few unquiet and ambitious aspirants to do something—they did not themselves know what; the resolutions adopted, which are mostly from the pen of Mr. John C. Spencer of New-York, if they are not as strong and as

startling as some people expected, are expressive of sentiments in which all parties agree. The closing speech of Judge Bates, the President, is spoken of on all sides with great and undisguised admiration, and the subsequent speeches in the informal mass meeting, of which Horace Greeley was chairman, served to let off the gas with which many gentlemen were filled, as well as afforded an opportunity to the curious to hear the eloquence of those who, from circumstances, were not able to mingle prominently in the doings of the Convention.

This place is the terminus of the Illinois and Michigan canal, of which so much has been said for the last twenty years. It was first surveyed in 1821, and in 1827 Congress appropriated a large quantity of the public lands in aid of its construction. Of its late history, the failure to complete it, its pecuniary troubles, &c., the capitalists of the country are well advised. Its fortunes have been chequered, and at times its fate has been doubtful.<sup>10</sup> But better days have come, and now there is a reasonable prospect of its speedy completion. It will not be long before the resources of the Illinois will be doubled by its means of easier transportation, and another link will be added to the chain which extends to the Atlantic market in Boston harbor.

I could spend much time here, in learning the sources of wealth which are to be opened to our New-England people, and in enjoying the hospitality of the inhabitants who are so closely connected with us by ties of the nearest kind. The business men are nearly all from our section of the country, and have brought with them and retained their New-England affections. The feelings and the

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<sup>10</sup> In January, 1836, the legislature authorized the Governor to borrow \$500,000 on the credit of the state, to begin the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Ground was broken July 4, 1836. Loan after loan was authorized as the work progressed, but the money did not come in fast enough and work ceased. In 1845, three trustees representing the state and the bondholders were chosen, loans were secured, and the work advanced rapidly. On April 23, 1848, the *General Thornton* passed through the entire length of the canal.

The state debt in July, 1847 was over \$14,000,000. This amount was divided into Internal Improvement Debt, \$8,000,000 and Canal Debt, \$6,000,000. Between the opening of the canal in 1848 and October, 1870, the receipts were \$4,360,419, and the expenses \$1,828,790.



habits tend to connect them still with the places from which they emigrated, and Boston, as the head-quarters of business, must, by and by, be the recipient of most of their trade.

I believe that there is not a single bank in Illinois now in existence. There was a State Bank, located at the seat of government in Springfield, but it has shared the fate of many others, and now only lives to wind up its affairs. The money in circulation is of all sorts, including New-York, Canada, Wisconsin, and New-England bills; but there is money enough, and much more of the business is transacted for cash than would, under the circumstances, be supposed. There are agents or brokers here, who draw on New-York and Boston when wanted, who are in good standing, and are quite able to supply cash drafts at all times. How far business would be facilitated by the establishment of local banks with small capitals, as in Massachusetts, I am not prepared to say, and that is a serious question, which is now undergoing consideration at a State Convention to revise the Constitution, which is now in session at Springfield.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

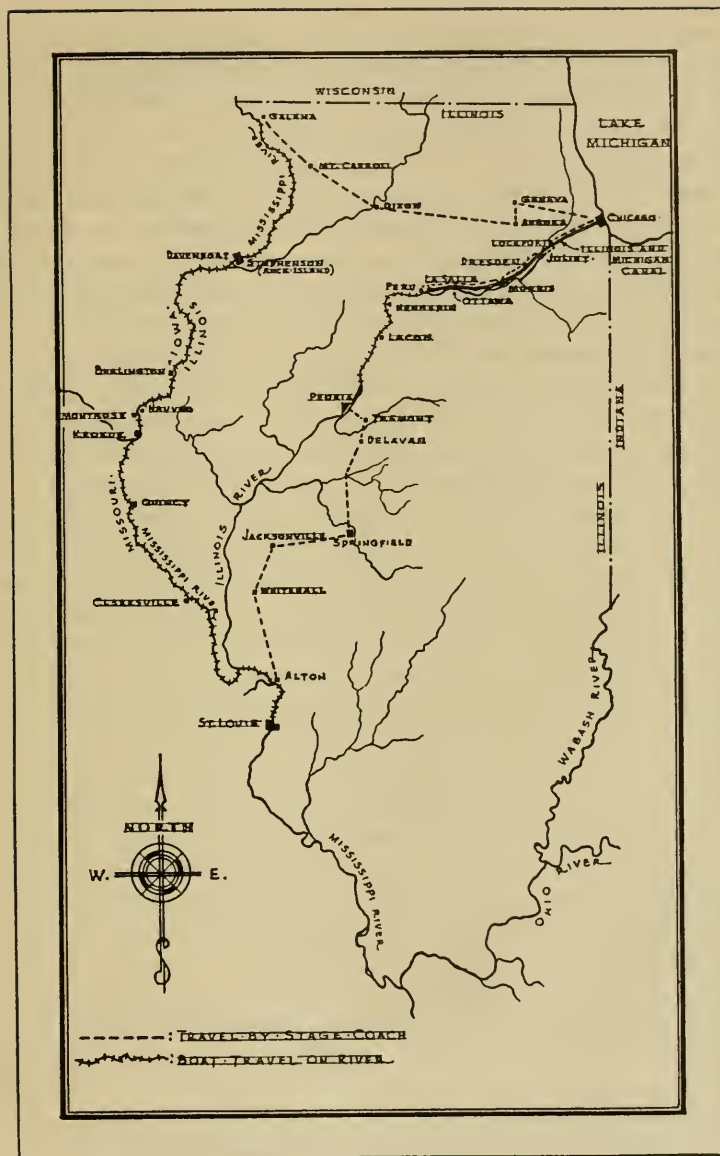
[July 9, 1847]

If any one had asked me, six weeks ago, to take a journey into the interior of Illinois, I should have hesitated, and should have been appalled at the task. Yet here I am, having been almost irresistibly led along from point to point, through states and lakes and rivers, and with a promise on my hands to go still further. A few hours, only, before the time appointed for leaving Chicago, on my way home, I was induced to join a party to this place, to inspect the interior of the country, to see the Illinois canal, and to learn from personal observation whether the extravagant assertions,—for they appear extravagant to a stranger,—which are made by the people of the West, are borne out by facts. Accordingly, as the *Baltic* started to go in one direction, I started in a stage-coach to go in another. Our party was composed of nine persons inside, three of whom were ladies. Three only were acquainted—that is to say, two only were known to me, and they

were strangers less than a week ago, and they knew no one else of the company. We get acquainted strangely on such occasions, and in this western country, quite readily. One lady was from Vermont, and lived at Dresden, in this state. She was traveling alone, fifty-six miles, to her present home. One man was a Bostonian, now residing in Wisconsin, who came away to seek his fortune with his young wife, eighteen years ago. His wife and her sister, both natives of Bangor, Me., were with him, having been on a pleasure tour to the lakes. They have neither of them been in New-England for more than five years. One was from Connecticut, one from New-Hampshire, and two from Massachusetts. All were from New-England, and I was the only one who had seen his native state for years. These facts came out in the course of the day.

We left Chicago at nine o'clock in the morning, and took our way across the prairies. At first the road was uneven, dusty and uninteresting, exhibiting some cultivated farms, and but little wooded country. Soon we came upon the line of the canal, which we followed, at a short distance, through its whole extent. I have not time, nor inclination, to give a description of the few places we stopped at on the first day, nor to tell of the gross deception, and swindling actions, and gross impertinences of the stage-drivers, of which I could, if so disposed, fill a column or two, and then not tell half. The public houses were worse than the worst taverns ever seen in New-England,—dirty, and ill-found in every respect. An old lady furnished, at short notice, a dinner of boiled eggs, fresh fried pork, and tolerable coffee, which was much more palatable in the participation than in the appearance.

The prairie, where not cultivated, and in many places where it is, remains without fences, for wood is scarce for many miles after we leave Chicago, and the few houses to be met with are sadly lacking in many of the necessary boards and timbers. Corn and wheat grow luxuriantly, and large droves of cattle are to be found grazing at different places. Hogs are numerous, and I can easily conceive that Chicago may, by and by, become a great pork mar-



BUCKINGHAM'S ROUTE

ket.<sup>11</sup> When at Chicago, I learned that the beef of this country was very superior, and I had opportunities of testing its good quality. The cattle are large, and grow fat on the prairie grass, at little or no expense, except of the time which it takes to raise them to the proper age to be driven to market. At a small place, called by some name which I have now forgotten, we stopped to examine a boiling spring, the water of which is as bad to the taste, and as much filled with sulphur, as the most enthusiastic lover of watering-places could desire. At several places in the neighborhood the water bubbles up through white sand, and the pool into which it comes looks more like a boiling cauldron than any thing else; but the water is neither warm nor cold. The driver gave it freely to his horses, and the people of the house in the neighborhood use it altogether for all purposes. The driver said it operated upon his horses as a sort of gentle cathartic, and made them healthy.

We came to no village until we arrived at Lockport, a place that is not laid down on any map that I have seen, where there are a number of stores and two or three taverns. Here is to be a large basin on the canal, and we had a fine opportunity to observe the construction of the great work, on which so many hundreds of thousands of dollars have been, and so many more are to be, expended. The canal as far as this place is nearly level, and is, for a greater part of the way, already finished; it is faced on the inside with a yellowish stone, which is found at different points, and which appears to be a combination of lime and sand-stone; it is easy to work, and lies in the quarries in layers of unequal thickness, but none of it more than a foot or a foot and a half thick. The canal is not, however, built up of stone throughout its whole extent, although it is for the most of the route. At Lockport the canal must be about two hundred or two hundred and fifty feet in width at the bottom, and the locks and abutments are laid in smooth, handsome masonry, that would do no discredit to any part of our country; there are seven locks in this place, in a distance of a few miles.

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<sup>11</sup> The exports of the port of Chicago in 1845 were: wheat 956,860 bushels, flour 13,752 barrels, beef 6,199 barrels and pork 7,099 barrels.



We then passed over to a town called Joliet, which was named after an old Frenchman who originally settled here and owned a great part of the land. By some mistake it was originally called Juliet,<sup>12</sup> but the name was changed by act of the legislature a year or two ago, to conform to the proper title of the old original settler. Here are several blocks of stone stores, evidently built with a view to a large trade, which is to come at some future day. The village is laid out on a plain, and on the side of a hill, with a handsome stone bridge crossing the canal; and here, too, is a large, broad basin. The projectors of this canal, and the original directors and engineers, appear to have had in view the immense business which it will take and which it will create, or they must have been very extravagant in their notions. It is probable that they knew what they were doing, what the future was to accomplish; but they were then, in a manner, before the age; they spent too much money, and by their financiering, their want of prudence, involved themselves and others in difficulties from which better counsels are now relieving the state. Now it is certain that the canal will be finished, the bonds will be paid, and nothing that I can imagine, not even another revulsion in the financial condition of the country, can prevent the stock from being a paying investment, except some mismanagement take place before the work is finished. The produce raised in the interior of the state is incalculable, and the producers must consume other articles in their turn, both of which, the exports and the imports, will, until a railroad is built side by side with it, pass through the canal to Chicago.

From Joliet to Dresden<sup>13</sup> we had an interesting ride, and at the latter place we took supper, our Yankee landlady serving us up codfish as a luxury, and hashed potatoes. At a small place called Morris, at half past eleven o'clock, we again stopped to change horses, and remained an hour in the most uncomfortable place you

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<sup>12</sup> The plat for "Juliet" was recorded in June, 1834, the name being that of the founder's daughter, Juliet Campbell; this name the town bore until 1845, when it was changed to Joliet by act of the legislature.

<sup>13</sup> "A town site near the junction of the Des Plaines and Kankakee, and on the line of the canal." J. M. Peck, *A Gazetteer of Illinois* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia, 3718), 191.

can conceive of; the tavern-keeper and all his people were in bed, but we succeeded, after some difficulty, in getting into the house, and had the luxury of two tallow candles, and a little water, which was warm, and not very palatable. On the opposite side of the road was another still smaller tavern, from which proceeded the sound of a violin. We walked over, and found about twenty persons assembled in a room on the lower floor, trying to learn to dance cotillions; the room was lighted by a solitary dip-candle; the teacher, who was also the musician, was in his shirt sleeves, and wore a shocking bad straw hat; the ladies were two little girls, two old women, and two or three fat, coarse-looking girls, about twenty; one of the male dancers wore a straw hat, two or three were without coats, and the one who was evidently the dandy of the place—for village it could hardly be called—wore a nankin-colored frock coat, and had his blue pantaloons strapped down so tight that he could scarcely move about. We amused ourselves for some time in witnessing the troubles and disasters which befell the instructor in his attempts to make the company go through correctly with the difficult figures of right and left, cross over, and promenade.

The rest of our ride during the night was as uncomfortable as any enemy, if we had one, could desire. We made progress at the rate of less than three miles an hour; the weather was intensely hot, and not a breath of air was stirring; the horses and carriage raised any quantity of dust, which, of course, rose only high enough to fill the carriage; and we were nine inside passengers, a new one having been taken in to replace the lady we had left at Dresden—[illegible]. We arrived at Ottawa about six o'clock in the morning, having seen nothing of the country for many miles, but bearing about as indisputable evidence that the road had led through the same soft and fertile soil that we had had during the whole day before. Ottawa is a considerable village, and has a large court-house, pleasantly situated in a square surrounded with thriving acacia, or locust trees, and a number of stores, besides some half dozen bar-rooms, independent of four taverns.

I have spoken of the want of wood on the prairies. The acacia is easily cultivated, and grows very rapidly wherever it is planted; some people are beginning to appreciate its advantage, and when we come to any considerable settlement, we find that they have commenced setting out trees on the borders of the lots; in some places, large groves have been planted, which will, in a few years, be very valuable. Of bridges, we saw few during yesterday, being obliged to ford most of the streams; as we entered Lockport we forded the river Des Plaines, which is an eighth of a mile wide, although there is a rickety bridge over it. The whole road from Chicago lies through a tract of country which is a sort of valley—if you can call that a valley where there are no hills on either side—which was once evidently the bed of a river. The prairie is in many places undulating, or rolling, and the waters of Lake Michigan once undoubtedly flowed uninterruptedly through to the Illinois river; the stones and rock formations show this, and the course of the former current is distinctly marked on the whole line. We forded a number of inconsiderable streams, which I am informed are sometimes—at the season of the year when the lakes and rivers are at the highest—almost impassable, and the greater part of the wood-land is on the borders of these streams.

After breakfast we took up our line of march, for it could hardly be called anything else, at the rate of two or three miles an hour, on the borders of the Illinois river, and passing by the village of La Salle, arrived at the terminus of the Canal at Peru, about twelve o'clock. Peru is next to Lisbon, in St. Lawrence county, New-York, the most uninviting place I ever saw. It is destined to become a great and growing village, the head and centre of a great trade. It is at the head of the navigation of the river, and already there are a number of stores, grog-shops, a barber's shop, and two taverns. In the early days in the history of the Canal, it was built up with log huts and mud cabins, to accommodate the Irish mud-diggers, and they remain in all their primitive ugliness, and with increased nastiness, the larger part of the village—certainly the most peopled, if we count the dirty children and the independent

hogs. I ought to state, however, that a little distance from the bank of the river, on the high bluffs, are some good farms, and several nice dwellings; as I had little time to go into the interior from the main village, my remarks must be considered as applying to the terminus of the canal. Mr. Webster once owned a farm in this vicinity, where Mr. Fletcher Webster was a resident for some year or more, but I believe it has been sold to some one else.<sup>14</sup>

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

[July 11, 1847]

After waiting three hours at Peru, in the hope of finding a better conveyance, we embarked on board a small steamboat called the *Dial*, to come down the Illinois river. We were loaded with freight and crowded with passengers. The engine was out-doors, on the lower deck, and altogether the prospect of comfort was very small. The captain, however, did his best for the accommodation of every body, and the steward served up a very good dinner. A company of about fifty raw volunteer recruits for the Mexican army were desirous of coming on board, but the captain refused to take them, and thereby deserves our gratitude; for they were excessively noisy and very drunk. We stopped at several small places on the river, to take in more freight, particularly at Hennepin and at Lacon. At this latter place, our friends J. & N. Fisher of Boston, own considerable property, and carry on a large business in packing pork, &c. It is rather a pretty place, and will, like all other places of the kind, share the fate of all in this Western country, and be a place of great trade. We remained at Lacon for nearly three hours, and took on board two hundred barrels of flour and provisions, two hundred bags of wheat, and some wool. We started again after dark, and arrived at Peoria about two o'clock in the morning.

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<sup>14</sup> Fletcher Webster, 1813-1862, was the son of the renowned Daniel Webster. He was graduated from Harvard in 1833. After studying law with his father, he moved to Peru, Illinois in 1837, where he practiced for three years. He was his father's private secretary during part of the latter's services as Secretary of State; a member of the Massachusetts legislature in 1847; and surveyor of the port of Boston, 1850-1861. He was killed in battle in 1862.





PEORIA IN 1846  
From a contemporary painting.



I have heard of flies, and mosquitoes, and bed bugs, and fleas, and sundry other nuisances that are said to infest the Western waters. I have heard of the same kind of troublesome vermin being rather numerous in Mexico, but I never could be brought to believe one half of what I experienced on board the *Dial*. The boat actually swarmed with them after dark. The heat of the weather and the heat of the boat, and the lights, brought them about us, and I should think that they were, in variety, countless as they were in number. The lady who lately so industriously counted the seeds in a fig, and published the results of her labor in the newspapers, would here have been absolutely foiled. They came and they staid; they were brushed off and fell upon the deck, but their places were immediately supplied by an additional increased number. The seeds in a fig would not grow or increase during the process of counting, but the insects were multiplying from dark until daylight. The floors, the state-room partitions, the mast of the boat, the ceiling, the freight, the baggage, and the passengers, were literally covered. We had mosquito nets to our berths, but shutting out the winged insects seemed but to serve as a better chance to allow the creeping things to luxuriate. Some people slept! Happy immobility! I tried segar smoke on the upper deck, and it had a partial effect; but the enemy was invulnerable, and as soon as possible I took my baggage in hand and went ashore at Peoria, and laid down on the steps of the hotel at the top of the hill, to wait for daylight.<sup>15</sup>

Peoria is a beautifully situated town on the right bank of the river, and is already the seat of a great business. It commands one of the most grand and interesting views in the world, and is built or laid out something in the New-England style. It has a large extent of back country to supply, and has increased

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<sup>15</sup> It is a river trip of sixty-seven miles from Peru to Peoria. The hotel in Peoria was either the Clinton House at the corner of Fulton and Adams, or the Planters House at Hamilton and Adams streets. These hotels were only two blocks from the Illinois River. In 1847, the city did not extend much, if any, above Adams Street, so either may have been at the "top of the hill."

within a few years almost beyond what it would be considered reasonable for me to state. In the little time I remained here, I had little opportunity to see its beauties or to learn of its trade and capacities; but as daylight came gradually on, I saw how it was situated, and soon took a walk around the more settled and business portion of the town. But everybody was asleep. The stores were shut, the night lamps were out or burnt dim, and the early morning dawn only exposed the silent beauties of a landscape without showing vitality. It was a picture of still-life, which any painter might copy, and which, if copied, would be purchased and appreciated by the man of taste, as the richest of his collection.

At four o'clock we took a stage coach for the interior, six inside, in a carriage built to carry but four, and drawn by horses that evidently knew their driver to be bent on making work easy and pay profitable. We crossed the river in a ferry-boat,<sup>16</sup> and then all got out and walked up a long hill, turning every now and then to admire the beautiful scenery, which included the town of Peoria, the river and other objects of interest in the distance.

Our party was again changed. We had two members of Congress from the state of Illinois, one Whig and one Locofoco,<sup>17</sup> and persons of other professions. Query,—Is a member of Congress a professional man or not? We started in a grumbling humor, but our Whig congressman was determined to be good natured, and to keep all the rest so if he could; he told stories, and badgered his opponent, who it appeared was an old personal friend, until we all laughed, in spite of the dismal circumstances in which we were placed. The character of the Western people is in every respect different from ours. Our Locofoco friend is a regular canvasser; he says that he has a way in his district

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<sup>16</sup> The ferry was owned by William L. May, a member of Congress from 1834 to 1838.

<sup>17</sup> The Whig Congressman was Abraham Lincoln, and the Locofoco was Robert Smith of Alton, Illinois. Smith was a member of Congress from 1843 to 1849 and 1857 to 1859.



of bowing to everybody, of kissing every man's child, and making love to every man's wife and daughter; he regretted that he did not ask "Long John," as everybody calls Mr. Wentworth, how he should behave in Wentworth's district, because the force of habit is so great with him, he feared he might exceed the bounds of propriety—it may be that the fashion with Long John is more abrupt, and in that case he might be going contrary to established usage. For some miles we were in Wentworth's district, and a tolerably poor district it appeared to be.<sup>18</sup>

We breakfasted at Tremont, a very pretty village on a prairie, but the propriety of the name did not make itself manifest, as there were no three hills any where in the neighborhood;—all was level country. Tremont was about twelve years ago an uninhabited prairie, and a gentleman of our party stated that a friend of his, one winter, since 1835, entrusted his wife to his care to go to a town some miles further south. That friend had purchased largely of lands in the present town of Tremont, and had had a lithographic map prepared, exhibiting the squares, and the buildings, and the trees which might thereafter be erected and set out. The wife saw the map and wished very much to go through her husband's town; but when she arrived there she was of course disappointed, as no houses, no squares, no trees, no any thing, was to be seen, but a level and uninteresting prairie.

Now there are houses; trees have been planted, and as every thing that is planted in this soil grows very rapidly, the squares and the streets are sufficiently marked; there is a meeting-house, and a tavern, lots of good farms, and a number of stores, and several mechanic shops, and a saw-mill worked by horse-power.

After breakfast we were fairly launched on one of the great prairies of the state, and I must acknowledge that I did not see a prairie in the neighborhood of Chicago—that is, comparatively speaking. For miles and miles we saw nothing but a vast expanse of what I can compare to nothing else but the ocean itself.

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<sup>18</sup> Buckingham was in error; the western boundary of Wentworth's district in 1847 lay some miles to the east of the stage route from Peoria to Springfield.

The tall grass, interspersed occasionally with fields of corn, looked like the deep sea; it seemed as if we were out of sight of land, for no house, no barn, no tree was visible, and the horizon presented the rolling of the waves in the far-off distance. There were all sorts of flowers in the neighborhood of the road, which, by the way, did not appear to be a road, and all the colors of the rainbow were exhibited on all sides,—before, behind, east, west, north and south,—as if the sun were shining upon the gay and dancing waters. We saw the white-weed of our New-England, the wild indigo, the yellow mustard, the mullen, the clover, red and white, the purple nettle, the various colored phlox, numerous yellow, pink and crimson flowers, and almost everything else that is beautiful, that we have ever heard of. Occasionally we passed a cultivated spot, where some person had purchased land from the government, and had made a farm,—cattle, too, are numerous, in herds, and horses in large droves, and swine uncountable. In the distance, we saw at intervals, groves of trees, which looked like islands in the ocean, and we learned that they were planted for the purpose of raising timber. Every thing will grow in this state, and the soil is everlasting, never wearing out, and never needing manure.

Again we came to a settlement, or village, called Delavan, where there was a post-office and a tavern. We changed horses and ordered dinner. Two doctors had offices directly opposite each other, and each kept a sort of apothecary shop; but such shops I never saw before. I went into one of them, and found in one corner a bed, the sheets of which appeared as if they had never been washed. On one side of the room was a case of shelves, on which were paraded half a dozen books, probably comprising the whole library of the worthy practitioner, and twice that number of bottles, labeled—*mirabile dictu!*—with understandable names, and two or three gallipots. In one corner was a pair of saddle-bags, and in another corner a saddle; but the doctor was off at a distance to visit a patient. I think I should be patient for some time before I should send for such a son of

Esculapius—and yet he may be a patient, pains-taking, learned, and very charitable member of his profession. Appearances are often very deceitful, as has been remarked many hundred times before.

We dined. And such a dinner! The table was set in a bedroom, which was neither plastered nor boarded up, the open air, if there had been any, coming through in all directions. If we had had a rain storm to encounter, we should hardly have been protected from it, and for mid-winter there was nothing to keep out the snow. But the landlord was civil, his wife and daughter barefooted and dirty, and he could only keep off the flies by waving continually over the table a bough which he had cut from one of his locust trees. The table-cloth was stained with the grease of many former meals, if with nothing worse, and his meat, which he called beef, was swimming in fat. The only things palatable were some fried eggs and some hashed potatoes, with some tolerable bread. However, we satisfied our craving appetites, and started in good spirits, with the hope of doing better next time.

How we speed on our journey for the rest of the day, it is unnecessary to relate. It is sufficient to say that we came, in the course of the afternoon, to a more wooded tract of land, forded several streams, and saw more beautiful flowers, several groves of acacias, and in the distance, what appeared to be hills of trees or islands of forests. Towards Springfield the cultivated farms were more numerous, and we passed through miles and miles of tall corn, the bright and beautiful green of which was almost dazzling in the sunlight; some acres of wheat, tall as an ordinary man; and many fields of oats, with some of barley—all of which appeared ready for the sickle.

We were now in the district represented by our Whig Congressman, and he knew, or appeared to know, every body we met, the name of the tenant of every farm-house, and the owner of every plat of ground. Such a shaking of hands—such a how-d'ye-do—such a greeting of different kinds, as we saw, was never

seen before; it seemed as if he knew every thing, and he had a kind word, a smile and a bow for every body on the road, even to the horses, and the cattle, and the swine. His labor appeared to be so great, that we recommended to our Locofoco friend to sit on the other side of the coach and assist in the ceremonies; but he thought that that would be an interference with the vested rights of his friend and opponent, and so he declined, although he was evidently much disposed to play the amiable to several rather pretty girls that we fell in with at one of our stopping places. It seems that as there is honor among thieves, so there is etiquette among Western Congressmen.

On the road, during the afternoon, we met three large wagons loaded with wool, and drawn by three yokes of oxen each, on their way to Chicago, the wool being destined for the Boston market. Think of that. Look at the map. See what an extent of country that wool is to pass over, what will be the distance it is to be carried by water through the lakes, round over the northern part of Michigan, through the lake St. Clair, lake Erie, and thence by the Erie canal to Albany, and then by water down the Hudson and over Long Island Sound, or over our Western Railroad, and judge for yourself if the Ogdensburg Railroad would not, if it were now open, save something in time, if not in money, to the owner of that wool.

I have spoken somewhere of the cheapness of butter and cheese and eggs and poultry, in Northern New-York. On our road to Springfield, we saw a first rate roasting piece of beef—the first cut of the rib—weighing sixteen pounds, which was sold to a tavern-keeper for *four cents a pound*, and that was said to be a good price in this neighborhood. Think of that, ye housekeepers in Boston! Of vegetables we are now in the enjoyment of all the luxuries of the season, such as green peas, cucumbers, string and other beans, and new potatoes. Cherries and strawberries are among the things that were.

We arrived at Springfield early in the evening, after the most fatiguing day's ride that, in all my traveling, I ever experienced.

We were all tired and dirty, covered with dust and perspiration, and not in much better humor than we were when we started in the morning. The strangers in Buffalo complained of the impositions, the lies, and the impudence of certain steamboat captains, but I will put an Illinois stage agent or driver against any thing that ever I saw before, in Europe or America, and bet odds upon him for impudence and imposition.

[SPRINGFIELD], ILLINOIS

[July 12, 1847]

Why should I date from Springfield, or from any other town or city, when what I have to say in this chapter of my Diary relates to every thing and every where? Last evening, after a ride of ten miles and back again, through a most excellent country, lined with corn-fields, and oat-fields, and hemp-fields, I was taken *vi et armis* to the house of a new acquaintance, all dusty as I was, to supper. Remonstrance was useless, for he said that Western life and Western customs would excuse every thing. I am very much in the habit of accommodating myself to circumstances, and on this occasion I found little difficulty in making apologies for my personal appearance. The lady was, as she styled herself, a "Western girl," and she was not at all discommoded by her husband bringing home a stranger. We had a hearty meal, and after a long conversation separated for the night.

The ride I have alluded to was through a wooded part of the country, up hill and down dale—but yet it could not be called woods as we talk of woods in New-England and as for hills, we actually rode over none that would compare with the ascent from Congress-street to Washington-street through Water-street. In this neighborhood there is to be found considerable bituminous coal, but it is not used much—in fact, it is not used at all in families, because it makes so much smoke. As far as I can learn, it is about equal in quality to the common sort of Sidney coal, which we use in Boston.



About five miles from the city of Springfield, our old acquaintance, J. Vincent Brown, has established himself as a manufacturer of hemp. We passed by his place, but did not stop, as he was not at home. He has a contract to furnish hemp for the United States government, but his principal building was burnt a few weeks ago, and has not yet been entirely rebuilt. It is said that the hemp manufactured at his establishment is the best, and is packed handsomer than any that is sent from this part of the country.<sup>19</sup>

I have rode again on the prairies some ten miles and back, to the south-east, and have been where there are no roads, riding over the grass, and seeing the hemp, and the corn, and the wheat, and the oats, all of which grow without any cultivation, except that of sowing. With us, corn has to be hoed—but here on the prairies, the ground is ploughed up, the seed deposited, and when it comes up the plough is once more run through the field, and the corn ripens as it stands. Dry weather does not affect it injuriously, as there is moisture enough in the earth to sustain it, and with the least attention that can be bestowed upon it, the yield is from thirty to fifty bushels to the acre; on old farms, fifty bushels is a fair average crop.

I said but little, nothing at all, if I recollect right, about the Illinois river. It is a narrow stream, presenting many pretty views, but nothing very striking, and little variety. The shore is well wooded, and the different towns or landing places which we passed, coming down to Peoria, were built high up on hills, having levees or slopes of land running down to the water-side, with no wharves; in every case where we stopped for freight or passengers, the boat was run bow on to the shore and a plough

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<sup>19</sup> J. Vincent Brown had a three-year contract with the United States Navy for hemp. Having an aversion to slave labor, Brown came to Sangamon County in 1846 and contracted with the farmers to raise 2,500 acres of hemp. He set up four steam rolling and breaking mills at a cost of \$60,000. The building which burned was on Prairie Creek near the Beardstown Road, eight miles northwest of Springfield. Citizens of Springfield and farmers of the vicinity contributed liberally to the rebuilding of the structure. According to naval tests, hemp grown in Sangamon County in 1847 was the finest in the world, but the costs of production were too high for a profit-producing crop.



run out, and when we started again the boat was pushed off by main force into the channel. This is said to be the worst season to see the prairies for the lover of flowers, but I have gathered many that were beautiful. We are now between the spring and autumn, when many of the most brilliant of the plants are generally in the perfection of splendor. I don't know what would become of my enthusiasm if I should be here at those periods, for I am all but enchanted now.

To-day I visited the State House, to listen to the debates of the [Constitutional] Convention.<sup>20</sup> The President is not worth much as a presiding officer, for he understands, or at any rate practises, little of the etiquette necessary for parliamentary government; he seldom rises, never announces the names of the speakers, allows two of them to speak at once, and puts the questions in such a tone of voice that he can scarcely be understood. The chief clerk,<sup>21</sup> who has a tolerably clear intonation, stated the question when I was there this morning, and if it had not been for his assistance, I do not see how the members could have understood what they were voting for. A motion was made and carried, for the Convention to go into committee of the whole, and I expected something better from the new chairman,<sup>22</sup> but he seemed to know but little, if any thing more than the President, and was not any better than that officer in his manner of conducting business. The members of the Convention are to appearance a much more intellectual body of men

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<sup>20</sup> The Constitution of 1818 was sadly outgrown; in the election of 1846, both parties favored a revision by large majorities. One hundred and sixty-two delegates began the task on June 7, 1847, and adjourned on August 31. The new Constitution, a series of compromises not too happily received by the leaders of either party, was ratified by a large majority at the polls in March, 1848.

Buckingham's views on Newton Cloud, the presiding officer, were not those of the *Illinois State Register*, Springfield's Democratic newspaper. Commenting on his election it said: "Newton Cloud was the Speaker of the last House of Representatives, and distinguished himself for impartiality, rapid dispatch of business and thorough acquaintance with parliamentary rules and usages. A better presiding officer could not have been chosen."

<sup>21</sup> Henry W. Moore of Gallatin County, the secretary or chief clerk, was Secretary of the Illinois Senate, 1846-1848.

<sup>22</sup> He refers to John Crain of Nashville, Illinois, who had served for ten years in the Illinois Senate and House.

than the members of our House of Representatives; they have generally marked features, and much character. As for discipline and etiquette, I cannot say much for them. Every member who spoke, rose and put one foot in his chair, and one hand in his breeches pocket, and more than half of the whole sat with their feet on the desks before them, tilting up in their chairs. They looked like sensible men, but they want training, from the President down.

The State-House is at present an unfinished building, of stone, and intended to be well-arranged; but the architect has set it too low on the ground, so that it will never be any ornament to the place.<sup>23</sup> It has a cupola built of wood, and stands in the centre of a large public square. By and by it will have a portico, with several large columns, but the columns are to be laid in blocks like the pillars before St. Paul's Church in Boston and will never present an appearance corresponding to the design of the architect. The interior, even, is not finished, and we ascend to the Representatives' hall, where the Convention assembles, by a flight of temporary stairs. The halls of the two houses will be very pretty when they are finished, but I doubt whether they will not want much remodeling before they will give satisfaction, either to members or to the sovereign people, who wish to listen to the debates of their servants.

Near the State-House is a much handsomer building, which was erected some years ago by the State Bank of Illinois: it has columns, and a porch in front, and looks quite classical. The business of the place is done in stores, which are arranged round and in the neighborhood of the square, and it is even now very considerable. A railroad is to be built from Springfield to Alton,<sup>24</sup> which will enable the farmers in the interior of the state to send their produce to a market; at present the only means

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<sup>23</sup> The State House, now the Courthouse of Sangamon County, was raised a story in 1901. Begun in 1837, the building was not completed until the early fifties.

<sup>24</sup> The first train on the Alton & Sangamon Railroad arrived in Springfield on September 9, 1852. On July 30, 1854, the connection was made with Chicago.



ILLINOIS STATE HOUSE, SPRINGFIELD  
Showing the Sangamon County Courthouse (1845-76) and the State Bank Building  
in the background at the left.



of transportation is by wagons, and this summer it has cost seventy-five cents to a dollar a barrel to send flour to Alton on the Mississippi, on its way to New-Orleans. Wheat cannot be sent, at present, at any price, as the cost of freight would absorb all its value,—the only way it can be sent to market, is in its manufactured state.

The fields of corn—the miles and miles of corn to be seen here—would strike a Massachusetts farmer with astonishment. A farmer in this neighborhood thinks nothing of raising one hundred acres of corn in one lot, and it grows of itself without any assistance. There are large lots of hemp also raised here, as I have before stated, and its greenness at this season, while not so dazzling as the corn, is equally deep and beautiful. As may be supposed, this is a great country for raising cattle, and I am almost afraid to tell you that I saw yesterday, in one drove, eleven hundred head of cattle, besides several hundred horses, and some mules, which were on the way to the East for sale;—they were going by the way of Indiana and Ohio to New-York state, and probably some of them may be found at Brighton before they are slaughtered. Hogs, of course, are plenty, and it is for the purpose of fattening these that so much corn is raised. When I said that Chicago might one day rival Cincinnati as a pork market, I may have been thought extravagant, but the thought is not so very absurd after all, if you will look at the means of raising the material. The animals are marked and turned out into the open prairie, and they come home at night, like the cattle, of their own accord, to be fed with “something warm and comfortable,”—something that they cannot get in their daily wanderings.

In the neighborhood of Springfield, and in the city itself, for I believe it is a city, there are many beautiful residences, and one can hardly believe that fifteen years ago, the place contained but two houses, one of which was a common drover’s tavern,—that there was, as lately as 1835, but one mail a week brought here from the South, and but one a fortnight from the



North,—yet such is the fact.<sup>25</sup>

JACKSONVILLE, ILLINOIS

[July 14, 1847]

The weather has been so hot and dry, the crowd has been so intense, and the bustle so great, that I have not as yet gone out of the house to-day. The crowds of people—men, women and children—which have been moving into this town since five o'clock last evening, I cannot pretend to estimate. I am favored with a room fronting on the public square, and can see every thing that is going on. The numbers increase rather than diminish, and the people are coming from every direction, and in all sorts of conveyances. Stage coaches are scarce, but large wagons are plenty. Women ride on horses and on mules. Whole families come in on large wagons, the travelers being seated on straw-bottomed country chairs. The females are dressed in all the colors of the rainbow; but white, or what was white when the dresses were clean, predominates. Parasols are as plenty as blackberries, and are only outnumbered by cotton umbrellas,—every other man, whether on foot or on horseback, and every *old* woman, of whom there are not a few, carrying one of the latter articles.

This day is devoted to the *solemn* duty of depositing in the grave the remains of Colonel Hardin, which have been brought from Mexico for that purpose.<sup>26</sup> The state Convention has adjourned, and came here from Springfield, for the purpose of honoring the dead with the presence of its members, who may be seen in the crowd with extravagant badges of black crape on the left arm of each. But it is in fact a *gala day*. There is no solemnity. A country muster in New England, in old times,

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<sup>25</sup> Buckingham overstated the rapidity of Springfield's growth, for more than twenty-five years, instead of fifteen, had elapsed since its founding. Springfield had perhaps thirty families in 1823, when the land was put on sale. The 1835 census listed 1,419 inhabitants, and this figure had increased to 3,900 by 1848.

<sup>26</sup> Col. John J. Hardin commanded the First Regiment of Illinois Foot Volunteers. He was killed in battle at Buena Vista on February 23, 1847. The newspapers estimated that the crowd in attendance at his funeral numbered over 15,000.



was as nothing to it. This is a temperance town, and no liquor is allowed to be sold in its precincts, but yet drunken men and boys are abundant, and noisy. Last night, a military company marched into town from Springfield, and to-day it has marched off to the strains of gay music, towards the former residence of the dead, to take up and escort the procession. The engine company is out with its banner. The masons are in full regalia. The Convention has assembled in a body, with black crape and blue scarfs. The square is over-run with mounted marshals, dressed with enormous white sashes, who are curvetting and galloping about in every direction, apparently with no other object in view than to show themselves off, and defeating that very object in a great measure, by raising such a quantity of dust, that it is difficult to see, sometimes, who kicks it up.

After an absence of two hours the people have all returned from the residence of the deceased, in the neighborhood of which—in fact, in sight of its very windows—an oration was delivered and a sermon preached, and other ceremonies performed. At the head of the procession rode the chief marshal, on a very gay horse, into whose sides we could see the rider, every minute or two, sticking his spurs, in order to make the animal still more gay. The marshal was dressed in white pantaloons, having a black stripe down the legs, and a sheet tied round his body, and he rode with his hat in his hand, bowing to the multitude like a victorious general making a triumphal entry into the city. The infantry company followed, the band playing Pleyel's Hymn in quick time. After the masons and others, came the black hearse bearing the corpse, and then the horse of Col. Hardin, dressed in mourning. But what was all this to what followed? Next came the family coach, containing the bereaved widow and orphans! I would not cast a word of censure upon any one who really sorrowed. And it is not for any of us to say who sorrows in this world, where the countenance and the actions so often belie the real sentiments; but what a mockery does this seem to be of grief, to parade it before thousands of

strangers—to follow in a gorgeous pageant the decorated hearse, in a march of some miles, through dust and noise, and surrounded with mounted marshals and racing cavalcade!

After marching all round the public square, the procession went to the burying-ground, where the body was deposited. After some recess, the multitude again assembled in a grove near Colonel Hardin's house, where a collation was served up to the public, and at which, after the manner of festive occasions, several speeches were made. Those of the returned volunteers who served under the deceased, and who belonged to the town, were treated to a collation at the house, by invitation of the widow!

And this is one scene connected with the Mexican war. It has been got up to gratify a spirit of military ardor, which is quite prevalent in this state, and it can result in nothing but the most incalculable mischief. More volunteers are called for, and regiments are now forming in Illinois. The fruit of to-day's pageant will be the enlistment of at least a thousand new victims to the insatiate ambition of our wicked and unprincipled government. The streets are filled with the fathers and the mothers, the brothers and the sisters of volunteers, and yet the whole seem to be afflicted with the military mania.

It is not in Jacksonville alone that this spirit prevails, but I see it in every town and village south of Chicago, and it is more apparent the further I penetrate into the interior of the state. It does not appear to be patriotism, but a sort of ambition to be some thing. I learn, that unlike the volunteers of Massachusetts and some other states, those from Illinois, with some few exceptions, have been from some of the most respectable families in the state. Those who first enlisted who have not died in Mexico, are now returning; but they express, at present, very little or no opinion at all as to their feelings—they have generally gone quietly to their homes, being for the present apparently satisfied with the glory they have achieved.

Yesterday I met Lieut. Col. Weatherford, and a queerer

specimen of a sucker never yet was seen; a daguerrian picture of him would have made a sketch that no one would believe could have been taken from nature. On him devolved the command of the regiment after Col. Hardin's death.<sup>27</sup> He is now a thin, tall man, very much emaciated by sickness, and darker colored than most Indians. He had on a coarse blue checked cotton shirt, with no collar, and no neck-cloth. He wore a dirty colored linen frock, which has seen much service, and was open in front like a common frock coat. His pantaloons were of the common cheap blue cotton, and were worn through in holes about where his legs probably touched the saddle in riding. He had on shoes nearly worn out, with large spurs strapped on around the instep. We have had descriptions of the uncouth appearance of the Mexican officers, but no description I have ever seen gave me any idea of such a poverty-stricken and miserable specimen of a commander as did the actual appearance of the Lieutenant Colonel of the first regiment of Illinois Volunteers, on this his return from a successful and *honorable* (!) career in the present war. This is no fancy sketch, and it is not in the least exaggerated.

The Lieutenant Colonel talked of the war, and of his deeds in arms, but withal was rather modest. He claimed great credit for his regiment, and expressed great admiration of the character of Col. Hardin. But it is plainly to be perceived, that he is a broken-down man, unfit for further service, and without much hope for the future. He will probably, with scores of others in similar situations, become, if he is not already, a violent politician, an office-seeker and a demagogue.

WHITEHALL, ILLINOIS

[July 15, 1847]

After the festivities of yesterday were closed at Jacksonville, our party started, in an overloaded coach, for the Mississippi River. The country begins to lose that level appearance that it

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<sup>27</sup> William Weatherford was elected colonel at Buena Vista, February 26, 1847, to succeed Colonel Hardin.

has exhibited before, and, as we proceed to the south, is more wooded, with more up-hill and down-hill. There is, however, still much prairie land to pass over, and the soil is, if possible, richer than it is farther north. Everything will grow here, and the settlers have taken some pains to plant trees, particularly the locust and the rock or sugar maple. In the valleys and on the hill-sides we find oak, and walnut, and the hazel-nut. On the hills are the blackberry and other bushes known in New-England—the mustard, the mullen, the whiteweed, &c. We are now in a part of the country that is “fenced in,” and we behold on every side the most luxurious farms, good houses and large barns. As we proceed south, the corn grows, or has grown, taller and taller, with ears, in the silk, higher up in the air than a tolerably tall man can reach. The wheat is harvested, and the oats are about ready. We have seen some beautiful fields of rye, and thick tall grass of the various descriptions. As we pass through a more generally settled district, we find the prairie grass is nearly run out, and in its place is the timothy, and the red-top, and the clover. This is surely a great country, and this is a glorious season for the farmer.

We have stopped for the night at a very pleasant village, situated on a prairie, and at a tavern that would do honor to any good housewife in New-England. Every thing is neat and clean, every body is attentive, the supper has been well got up, and abundant in variety, as well as excellent in quality. The name of the landlord is Tracy, and he and his wife deserve to be remembered, and to be made known to the traveling community. May they become as rich as they wish, and be able to return to their native New-England, well rewarded for their toil and privations.

Late in the evening a stage-coach from Alton arrived, containing several returned volunteers, who were met by about fifty personal friends, who were in waiting. Of course there was much boisterous gladness exhibited on both sides; but the volunteers did not exhibit marks of much prosperity, nor of much elas-



ticity of spirit. They have "seen the elephant," and have very little to say about him. The war is a sorry subject to most of those who have been engaged in it.

I think that it is a sort of duty that a traveler owes to his friends and acquaintances, to point out to them not only the best, but the worst, places on the route. It is not probable that many of my readers will ever find themselves in Jacksonville, as it is not on a direct route to any where that Boston people are likely to seek. But I must warn them to avoid the town until it has a good tavern. It has a *hotel*, which is not fit for a decently-dressed man to set his foot in, and a *house*, where he can find nothing comfortable. Although the town was full of people yesterday, both landlords left their boarders or guests to take care of themselves, and officiated all day as marshals to the procession. At the *hotel* we were overrun with women and children; the breakfast was absolutely nasty, so that I could not be prevailed upon to go to the table at dinner, which proved, I was informed, still more disgustingly dirty.

It seems as if I were doomed to be a victim to the Mexican war, in one shape or another. I was sick of it in Boston, and glad to be absent from all discussions on the subject for several weeks. But now I have again got into a current, and every day, every hour, I hear something about it. We have been bored almost beyond endurance, for one whole afternoon, by a returned volunteer lieutenant, who has described over and over again the battles of which he was a spectator, and sickened with his nonsense about patriotism, and disgusted by his avowed principles. He says he had a brother and a brother-in-law killed by the Mexicans, and he considers it a duty, as well as a pleasure, to kill as many Mexicans as he can. The scoundrel talks, too, of religion, and claims that the present war is favored by the Almighty, because it will be the means of eradicating Papacy, and extending the benefits of Protestantism. I doubt whether he has any more Christianity than knowledge, and his whole talk proves him a fool and a liar.



I give you a short letter to-night, for heat and dust, and the fatigue of incessant travel, have rendered me more fit for the bed than for my usual gossip.

ALTON, ILLINOIS

[July 16, 1847]

We came into this place at a snail's pace, although the road was down hill. The hill was so steep that it would have been dangerous for all of us if the wheels of the coach had not been locked hard enough to oblige the horses to draw. On the top of the last hill I had my first glimpse of the Mississippi river—apparently a calm, sluggish stream, as smooth as plate glass, with a bright polish which reflected the rays of the burning sun with dazzling splendor—it was painful to look at it. I found afterwards, that it was not so sluggish, but that it ran at the rate of about four or five miles an hour. When one is on its banks, it is a much more attractive sheet of water, and although differing from the St. Lawrence in its whole character, is, perhaps, quite as interesting to contemplate. Opposite to the city is a large island which prevents a view of the Missouri shore, but on the bluffs one can see over the low land and its trees, and have an uninterrupted sight of the hills of the neighbor-state.

This place is somewhat celebrated for the abolition riots which occurred here some years ago,<sup>28</sup> and my general impression was, that it was rather a rowdy city. But I find the people of an entirely different character. It is situated much like our New-England towns, and instead of having all the residences collected together near the centre of business, they are scattered all round among the hills, and over an extent of country embracing many miles. The principal portion of the inhabitants are New-England people, and many were originally from Boston—men who came

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<sup>28</sup> On the night of November 7, 1837, the abolitionist editor, Elijah P. Lovejoy, was killed in attempting, with his friends, to prevent the seizure by a mob of his printing press, stored in the warehouse of Godfrey, Gilman & Company. The incident was broadcast by the press over the United States, many editors condemning the affair as an assault on the freedom of the press and speech even while they condemned abolition.

out to this country some twelve or fifteen years ago, and have, under all the fluctuations of trade, all the changes from rich to poor, and poor to rich, maintained their integrity, and are now, although Alton is not the thriving place it once was, doing good business, and are mostly well off in this world's goods. As a friend remarked a few days ago, Illinois, of all the states in the Union, is the poor man's country. Its resources are unbounded, and wherever an industrious man plants his foot, or digs the soil, he is sure to be remunerated for his trouble. The prairies once presented a vast expanse of waste land, covered with grass, and flowers of all the colors of the rainbow. Only a few years have been devoted to their cultivation, and now they are covered with corn and wheat, and oats, potatoes, hemp, and trees. Time was when there were no trees, except on the borders of the streams—now the locust is to be seen every where, and the farmers have planted that and many other descriptions of trees on the borders of their lots, in groves, and before their dwellings. There are a number of Dutch farmers settled in this neighborhood, and they have profited by the facility which the ground affords to become rich. As we approached Alton, the crops were more advanced than we had seen them in other places, and the large and substantial barns, are getting to be well filled. The Yankee, however, is the thriving man, all the world over, and where he is, there you see evidences of care and neatness, and plenty and prosperity; he may be laughed at, he may be scorned, he may be abused in various, or in all ways, but Jonathan is the man on whom the people, his neighbors, rely for every thing that is stable, every thing that brings or continues civilization, good government, good order, and lasting prosperity.

The state of Illinois, some years ago, and not many years ago neither, was infatuated with a sense of its own natural advantages, its own unbounded resources, and launched forth into the wildest scheme of internal improvement.<sup>29</sup> It projected rail-

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<sup>29</sup> The Internal Improvement Bill became a law on February 27, 1837. Approximately \$10,000,000 was voted for river improvement and railroad building. Many enterprises were begun, but none of them finished. Within three years the

roads and canals in every direction. It borrowed money that it could not pay. It commenced works that it could not finish. It employed engineers to lay out routes, who knew only in theory what the people wished to have constructed by practical men. The consequences are known to the world, and canals and railroads, half or quarter completed, some graded, some half built, are to be met with in different parts of the state. A better day is now dawning, and those who once thought the time for such gigantic operations had not then arrived—the men of reflection—are now moving to accomplish the task which others too soon under took—are destined to reap the benefits which early cupidity came near losing.

A railroad is now to be built from Alton to Springfield, which cannot fail to be an investment of great profit to the stockholders. The company has a very favorable charter, and the state gives its aid in the shape of a free grant, of such portions of a formerly graded road as they may need or can use to advantage. The road will have for its terminus the capital of the state, and will open to the towns and the farms of the interior a means of communication with the seaboard, or rather with navigation, which must be immensely profitable. All along on the line, and I have been over the whole of it, there is a country capable of producing, which does now produce enormous crops of every thing, almost, that will grow in any soil. Alton is so situated that boats of the largest class can come up to its levee and load at all seasons of the year; it is the head of navigation for freighting vessels, and the completion of this railroad will be the means of increasing its trade to an almost incalculable amount. The railroad as at present is intended to be built, will be eighty-eight miles in length; the engineers will undoubtedly shorten it about ten miles. It runs through a country very favorable for construction, and on almost a level grade for the greater part of the line. The

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craze had run its course, and the state faced a debt of about \$15,000,000, with repudiation not an impossibility. No interest was paid on this debt from July 1, 1841 to July 1, 1846. Measures enacted during the administration of Gov. Thomas Ford, 1842-1846, looked toward the ultimate extinction of the debt.

state has a road graded for ten miles at one end, and fifteen at the other, which will be taken by the company, and can be put in order at once for the rails at a trifling expense.

I have, in a former letter, spoken of the Illinois and Michigan canal, which runs from Chicago to Peru. I am not as competent as some others to give an opinion, and it may be great impertinence in me to express one; but I think that every practical New-England man, who makes a personal examination of the route, will agree with me in wondering that the commissioners, who came out here for the English bond-holders, and induced them to advance more money for its completion, did not recommend turning it into a railroad. Since we have established it as a "fixed fact" in New-England, that transportation can be had cheaper on a railroad than on a canal, the expense of lockage and delay are things to be avoided if possible. It will not be many years before a railroad will be built on that route, that will be worth to the public more than fifty canals.

Alton has, in its immediate vicinity, five extensive flour mills, and a large number of stores. The steamboats from the lower part of the Upper Mississippi are continually passing, and last night the snorting and belching of the engines, the ringing of the bells of the boats, was to be heard every four minutes. The ware-houses are built of stone and brick. There is an abundance of lime stone to be found in the town, close down to the edge of the river. The state penitentiary<sup>30</sup> stands on a high bluff overlooking the town, the river, and the neighboring part of the state of Missouri; the prisoners are employed now in manufacturing hemp,—they used to be engaged in all sorts of mechanical labor, but on a remonstrance to the Legislature, setting forth that they underworked the regular mechanics, a law was passed obliging the overseers to put them to a kind of work that would not interfere with the industry of more honest people.

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<sup>30</sup> The penitentiary at Alton, authorized by the legislature in 1827, was completed in the early thirties. It was used until 1860, when the prisoners were transferred to the new prison at Joliet.



Gen. Semple,<sup>31</sup> the author of the famous post-office report, of which the readers of the *Courier* have heard something before, lives at Alton, but I understand that he is disgusted with politics, and is now devoting his time and talents to the construction of a steam car, that he expects will travel over the prairies with or without the aid of roads.<sup>32</sup> I lost an opportunity to see this new machine a few days ago, in consequence of the forgetfulness of a friend; but I am informed that it is almost as visionary a thing as the report to which I have before alluded. It will probably be able to carry the mails through the Pacific Ocean, as soon as it is ready to carry passengers across the continent of America. The General hates President Polk and the whole administration, and is not by any means chary in his comments upon their want of foresight, in not appreciating his transcendent abilities sufficiently to give him either a high military or civil appointment.

I rode out a few miles in the neighborhood, this afternoon, with a friend, to see the country. The continued dry and hot weather has made the roads very dusty, and every thing now appears to less advantage than usual; but the sites for dwellings, the houses and farms are improved, and the indications of prosperous industry every where apparent, give one a favorable idea of what the citizens may become in a short time. North Alton is at a short distance, and besides being a place of considerable farming, is the residence of a great number of coopers, who make

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<sup>31</sup> Gen. James Semple, 1798-1866, was born in Green County, Kentucky; he studied law in Louisville; moved to Edwardsville, Illinois in 1818 where he stayed only a short time, returning there again in 1828; Brigadier General in the Black Hawk War. Semple served several terms in the legislature and was twice elected Speaker of the House; he was Chargé d'Affaires to New Granada, 1837-1842, and United States Senator, 1843-1847. He was enthusiastic over the acquisition of Oregon, and in the spring of 1846 brought in two reports to the Senate calling for the establishment of a mail route to Oregon. His second report detailed the possibilities of a route by way of the Isthmus of Panama.

<sup>32</sup> General Semple secured patents in 1845 on what he called a "prairie car." The car was very similar to the old-fashioned locomotive in appearance, but differed materially in its mechanical construction, having a broad wheel to enable it to run over the prairies. The car worked successfully, but General Semple did not have sufficient funds to continue experimentation. Forced to abandon the project, he left the car standing out in the prairie near Springfield, where it gradually fell to pieces and was pointed out to passers-by as "Semple's Folly."



a large quantity of barrels for flour and provisions. It has two churches, which look rather out of character, for want of paint. In this village, on a pretty spot, is situated the college, which was endowed by the late Dr. Shurtleff of Boston, and which bears his name.<sup>33</sup> It is a large brick building, but is not at present very prosperous, in consequence of the want of sufficient funds to procure professors and teachers of the highest talent.

Another regiment of volunteers for Mexico is quartered in camp in this village,—it is not quite full, but another company is daily expected, and as soon as it arrives the election of officers will take place. The most prominent candidate for Colonel is Mr. [Joseph B.] Wells, now Lieutenant-Governor of the state. Col. Baker, formerly member of Congress, who has already served with distinction, was a candidate, but he peremptorily declines, as he thinks he is entitled to a higher rank, and is now an applicant for appointment as Brigadier General.

Yesterday, the packet-boat from St. Louis brought up the bodies of three Lieutenants belonging to this place, who were killed in battle in Mexico, and they were received with some ceremony. Guns were fired by way of salute, the bells tolled, and a speech was made on the levee, to which nobody made any reply. A procession was then formed, and the bodies were carried to one of the churches, where they will lie in state for several days, after which there will be a *celebration* on a small scale, after the fashion of that which I saw at Jacksonville. Discharged volunteers, who have served their year in Mexico, are daily returning by the way of St. Louis, and on the arrival of every boat they are saluted by the firing of cannon, and other demonstrations of respect. A few nights ago, it was rumored that a number were on board one of the packets,—the guns were fired as usual, the crowd collected to see them land, and the chairman or spokesman of the committee of reception mounted a woodpile and made a patriotic speech. But lo and behold! there was no volunteer

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<sup>33</sup> In recognition of Dr. Benjamin Shurtleff's gift of \$10,000 in 1835, the name of Alton College was changed to Shurtleff College in 1836.

on board, except a drunken Irishman, who was astonished, as well he might be, at the eloquence which had been so lavishly thrown away upon him, and he exclaimed, with a hiccup, that it was "very affecting—it almost made me cry."

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

[July 17, 1847]

We took passage, at eight o'clock, on board the steamboat *Luella*, but did not get away from the levee until nearly nine. These levees are the banks of the river graded to a convenient slope, sometimes paved and sometimes left in their natural state, and are either dusty or muddy, according to the weather. Wharves there are none, in this part of the country—or rather there are very few. At Alton, as at other places that I have seen on the Mississippi and on the Illinois rivers, the boats passing down always turn round and come to the levee with the bow upstream; this is done for the sake of convenience, and because there would be much trouble in stopping head-way if they attempted to come to with the force of the current in the same direction in which they are running.

Our passage down the river was very pleasant, for there was a slight breeze blowing from the south. The scenery was beautiful. A short distance from Alton we came to the low land called the American Bottom—which at times, when the river is highest, is generally overflowed; it is rich soil, richer than any other in the world. This bottom-land extends on both sides of the river for nearly a hundred miles, and has proved to be inexhaustible—it never wears out. Other lands will yield large produce, but it is necessary to change the seed from year to year, from corn to wheat and from wheat to oats, &c. &c.; but on the American, or as some people more appropriately call it, the Mississippi bottom, it has been proved that the same kind of crops can be produced every year; and at one place farther south, it is said that corn has been raised every year in succession for one hundred and fifty years.

A few miles from Alton, I believe only three, is the mouth of the Missouri, a yellow-colored water, which empties into the Mississippi, but does not mix with it for miles and miles in its course. The difference in the two streams is marked so strongly, that while one is on the clearer waters of the latter, the waters of the other, running only a few feet distance from the boat, look like a sand-bar extended along the side. After we proceed some miles, the two become united; but after all it is like the amalgamation of milk and molasses, with a streak of light and a streak of dark. The Mississippi, however, never again becomes the clear, bright water that it is in the regions above. The bottomlands are well wooded, and the foliage of the trees is the most dense I have ever seen. I believe that oaks and elms, and maple and locust, and walnut, are the most abundant, although other varieties are interspersed. Occasionally you will see a lombardy poplar, but it is where somebody has planted it—it is not natural to the soil. There are no chestnuts and no pines.

At eleven o'clock, we arrived at St. Louis.<sup>34</sup> We have heard of a "forest of masts," but here, without seeing a mast, we were at once in the midst of a forest of chimneys or smoke-pipes. There may be sailing vessels on this river, but the commerce is carried on by means of steamboats. Like the people of every other place, the people here say we can see nothing now,—it is not the season, there is no business doing, and there are few boats here. But I see enough to surprise my unsophisticated Yankeeism. The number now, dull as the season may be, may very properly be named legion.

The levee is high, with a very steep slope, and is paved with blocks of lime-stone. It is covered with all sorts of produce, and is lined on its upper side with immense warehouses; on its lower, with steamboats. The boats lie in regular order, close together, with their bows run on to the shore, as compactly as they can be placed, and discharge or take in freight and passengers from the bow. I believe there was not a boat lying broad-side to the levee

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<sup>34</sup> The population of St. Louis in 1847 was estimated at 55,000.

when we arrived, and we were obliged to come to along side of the stern of another steamer, and the passengers crossed her decks the whole length, in order to get on shore.

When we landed, the sun was apparently doing his utmost to burn up all the life and energy that remained, after a week's summer weather, in man and beast. The lime-stone, of which the pavements are composed, and the lime-stone soil of the unpaved streets, is light colored, almost white, and the reflection of the sun upon it is dazzling to the eyes. We have hotter weather in Boston, occasionally, than they have had at St. Louis this summer, but it is only for a few days, and is even then occasionally relieved by intervals of east wind. But here, the heat comes on gradually, and is regular, affording no stopping places, so to speak, although the mercury in the thermometer may not be more than ninety or ninety-four, it is the same from morning to night and night to morning, day to day, burning on and baking the people as by a slow fire. I thought that the heat at Alton was tolerably severe, but at St. Louis I find it intolerable.

The first thing that struck my attention, after the steamboats, was the business-like character of the place. I am writing my first impressions, recollect, and therefore I may say something by and by, or hereafter, that will not correspond with what I say now. As Rochester, a small place, was more bustling to me than Boston, and Buffalo appeared larger and more of a business place than Rochester, so St. Louis, with only about fifty thousand inhabitants, would seem at first glance to do more business than New-York or Liverpool. On the levee were all sorts of goods, and in all sorts of packages. The warehouses are of great height, situated not only on the levee, but in the street above, or in the cross streets which run down to the river, and they all appear to be filled with goods of all descriptions. The drays are numerous, and the draymen, black and white, keep up a constant yelling and shouting that would stun a quiet man.

Hot as it was, a friend induced me in the middle of the day to jump into his buggy and ride around the city, in order to obtain





ST. LOUIS LEVEE, 1850





a sort of outside view of its magnitude and its character. We did not go off from the paved streets into the suburbs, but we rode round through the principal and some of the minor thoroughfares. The retail trade is extended over the whole city. Large blocks of many storied brick dwelling-houses are in all the streets. Churches and other public buildings are numerous. Hotels are all but uncountable, and bar-rooms are quite so. The sidewalks are paved with brick, and are wide and comfortable. The streets in the upper part of the city are wide and run at right angles, many of them being shaded with trees, which are planted on each side!

Dinner time brought us to the Planters' House, where I have concluded to rest for a day, before I take up my line of march for a new and somewhat unknown region on the Upper Mississippi.

#### ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

My notes of St. Louis are meagre, for the heat of the weather, and the fatigue of the last week, rendered it necessary that I should remain in the house nearly all the time I have been here. The Planters' House, at which I am staying, is built after the plan of the Astor House, and is nearly as large. It is kept by Stickney & Scollay, both of whom, I believe, are Yankees. Its situation is the best and pleasantest of any public house in the city, and by favor of good friends, I was enabled to secure an upper room, with a southern aspect, which gave me all the comfort of breeze and freedom from mosquitoes that any one can obtain in St. Louis. The street in front is broad, and appears to be the Broadway of the city. An evening stroll on Saturday night was very pleasant, exhibiting the different retail shops, confectioneries, &c. to good advantage. The majority of the business streets are narrow and much cumbered with goods and people. Even in the day-time, and under a broiling sun, it appeared as if the people were all in the streets in the part of the city devoted to traffic. Taverns and grog-shops are abundant, and, like the boot and shoe shops of Montreal, appear to be a very large per

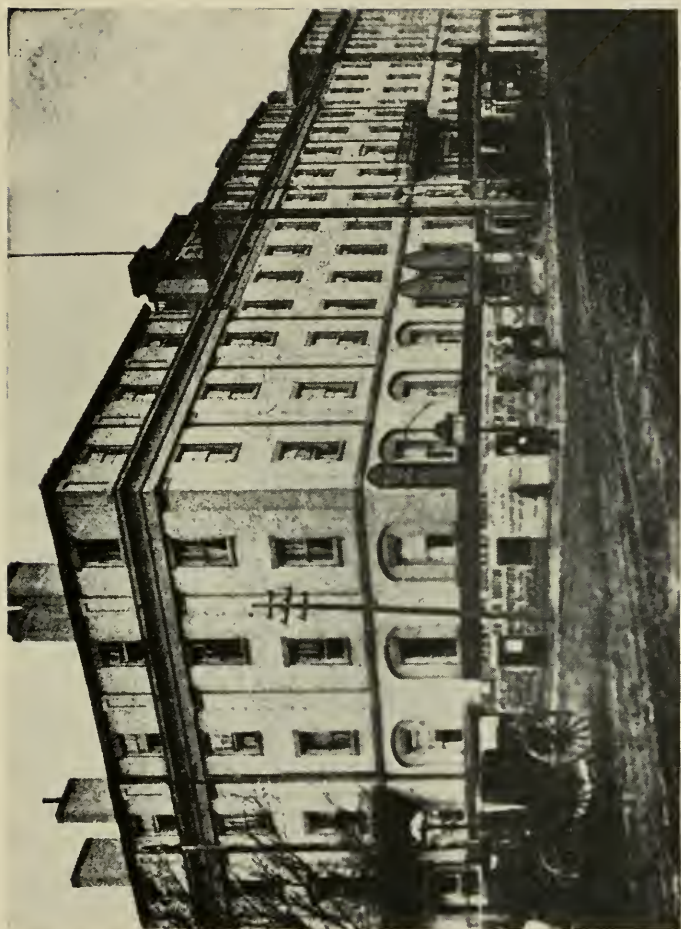
centage of the whole number of places devoted to business in some particular neighborhoods. The streets devoted to wholesale trade, exhibit more bustle and activity than those of New-York or Boston, even at this dull season of the year, and one is irresistibly led to the belief that the trade of St. Louis is not only most flourishing, but must be increasing. A gentleman informs me that he has seen five hundred large steam-boats discharging and taking in cargoes at the levee at the same time. There is one cotton factory in the city, which was established and is kept in operation by a German house.

There are several foundries and machine shops, which turn out the very best of work; it is said that some of the machinery manufactured in St. Louis is equal, if not superior, to any that has ever been made at the East. Within a few years, there have been some splendid boats built in this city or its neighborhood, and the improvements which are constantly made, in the strength, speed, capacity, and light draught of those which hail from this port, will, ere long, make this *the* place in the West for ship-building.

On the square, next to the Planters' House, is the Court House, a most uncouth looking building at present; they tell me it is to be altered and improved.<sup>35</sup> It is built in the shape of a square cross, or a square building with four wings. The front of each wing is built as high as the top of the second story, of white limestone; the rest is of brick, including all the space above the second story window caps. It has the air in part of falling to decay, and in part of being unfinished. Good and substantial stone steps lead to the entrances, and an iron fence has been erected partly round the building. When seated in my chamber this morning, I heard the stentorian voice of somebody making a speech, for so long a time that I concluded that I would go down and see what it all meant. Following the direction of the sound, I soon found myself in the Criminal Court. Twelve jurors, most of them with their coats off, one apparently asleep,

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<sup>35</sup> Little work was done on the courthouse in 1847.



PLANTERS HOUSE, ST. LOUIS, 1865





and all seated in such way as could make them most comfortable, were supposed to be listening to a one-eyed, shaggy-headed lawyer, who was arguing for the defence. The Judge was quite a young man, not more than thirty years of age, and the most gentlemanly looking of all in the room.<sup>36</sup> Three other persons were seated at the tables appropriated to counsel, and they were too much amazed, evidently, with the queer arguments of the person speaking, to talk or write. There were half a dozen spectators, and the whole number of persons present, judge, jury, counsel, prisoners, and spectators, did not amount to twenty-five. It was astonishing to see how a man could work so hard, and talk so loud, and chew so much tobacco, with the thermometer at ninety-six, and not a breath of air stirring. The gentlemen—for all lawyers are gentlemen,—appeared to be trying to make out a case of somnambulism in one of the witnesses, and told us of his having experienced dreadful sensations on several occasions, in consequence of suddenly waking at night, and fancying he saw sights which he did not see; he told how easy it was to be deceived by appearances, and to be frightened at nothing; and he put it to the Jury to say for themselves, whether they had not often made mistakes as to objects which they looked at in the dark. From all his arguments he deduced that the principal witness was half asleep when she saw what she had testified to, and was not half certain of that which she did see—therefore, he claimed an acquittal. Before he concluded I came away.

There are many handsome public buildings in St. Louis, and many blocks of handsome and substantial private houses. But I am astonished to see that, with fifty thousand inhabitants, the streets are not lighted at night.<sup>37</sup> I regretted that I could not see the interior of some of the churches, and still more that I was unable to accept of several invitations of private hospitality, all of which must be deferred till circumstances, as strange as those which brought me unexpectedly here now, shall send me here again.

<sup>36</sup> Alonzo W. Manning was judge of the Criminal Court in 1847.

<sup>37</sup> The streets of the business section were first lighted by gas on Nov. 6, 1847.

This is the first hotel I have seen, since I left home, where I could enjoy a breakfast. I have eaten breakfasts every day, but they have only been in the performance of a regular duty. But here, at the Planters' House, a man can come to the table and enjoy an hour in the morning, in comfort. So few people in this busy world know how to live, that half of those who do live only exist. Now men will tell us that every thing depends upon dinner, for which they want "time;" therefore they are up early in the morning, swallow a cup of tea or coffee, bolt half a pound of beef steak or other meat, not properly cooked, a few hot cakes, and off they run to business; before noon, they are half starved, and while the stuff they put into their stomachs in the morning is still undigested, they take a hearty luncheon, that ought to serve a moderate man for his dinner, if it were fit for anybody to eat, and away they run again to business; before they have digested either the breakfast or the lunch, they go to dinner, and "take time for it"—that is, they perhaps sit half or three quarters of an hour at table, without any appetite, very dainty, and pretend to enjoy luxuries which their cooks know not how to prepare for the table, and which they are not in a fit state to appreciate. And yet such men live and grow rich, and before they are sixty, die of apoplexy or of indigestion. If a man would have a good constitution, and be in a proper state of body or mind to do business and enjoy a good dinner, he should spend an hour in the *early morning*, at his breakfast table, with his family and friends—not in eating and drinking, but taking his food in moderation, and sitting with his newspaper or his conversation, or both, until his food begins to digest; he will then be fit for business or pleasure all the rest of the day. Let him avoid a lunch, for he will need none, and he will enjoy his dinner again, as his breakfast, and it will do him good, however humbly it may be served, however scanty or coarse, or devoid of luxuries and variety. Let no one say he has no time in the morning to *waste* at the breakfast table, for if business requires him to be early about, he can get up early enough to take all the time he wants.

At the Planters', as at the Astor House, you can get a good breakfast, and take all the time you wish for. Of course, I recommend it to travelers coming this way, as a place where they will not be hustled out by hurrying servants, before they are half finished, nor entirely deserted by company.

#### MISSISSIPPI RIVER

And this is the "mighty father of rivers!" He is like "linked sweetness, long drawn out," but he is a small father, after all, at this end, not being over a mile and a half to a mile and three quarters wide above St. Louis. Of course I know nothing of his rotundity below. From here upwards, he is slim and shallow. About twenty miles above St. Louis, the Missouri river empties in him, as I have already stated, and as the Missouri is the bigger, if not the better stream, it seems rather a mistake that it should lose its identity—it would be more appropriate to give the name Missouri to the whole river below, and to lose the Mississippi. But this is no affair of mine.

We left St. Louis about half past seven o'clock in the evening, that is to say, we backed out from the levee at that time, but we stopped to take some passengers off from a boat just arrived from Ohio, and to take in some salt from another boat, and the consequence was that we actually did not get away until nine o'clock. The Western people are a queer people in some respects, and the delays and the stoppages that one meets with in traveling in their country are rather annoying to our more regular Yankee travelers. For instance—three steamboats were advertised to leave St. Louis on Saturday for Galena, and one on Monday. On Monday, neither of them had gone, and all were for taking in freight. By the advice of those who knew, I concluded to take passage in the *Kentucky*. The captain said he should start at noon, *but*, if he did not, he should certainly go at three, P. M., and he would send word to the hotel. Three o'clock came, and no message was sent. At half past four I went on board with my baggage, and, wishing to spend a short time with a friend, asked if the boat would be ready before the expiration of an hour; I

was told that she certainly would. However, I went off and took an hour and a half, and came back and was obliged to wait, as I have said above, until seven and nine o'clock. Neither of the other boats were ready to leave as soon as we did, and the boat advertised to sail certainly on Monday, a "regular packet," we met about a hundred miles up the river on Tuesday, coming down.

We stopped at Alton during the night, and took in two passengers, but until morning there was not much to be seen, although the twilight was long, and I had my usual luck of traveling by moonlight. The bottom lands which lie along the river for nearly a hundred miles, are not interesting in the matter of scenery, as there is much sameness in them; after they are once seen, they only appear beautiful for their richness of soil and their beautiful supply of produce. The shore is generally bold—sufficiently so for the light draught boats to run up where it pleases the captains, for any purpose whatever, whether it be to shake hands with a friend, to call on a sweetheart, to take in wood, or land or receive passengers, for all of which purposes many captains frequently stop.

We have been five nights and nearly five days on the river between St. Louis and Galena. At the mouth of the Des Moines river, which enters into the Mississippi near a little village called Clarksville, on the Missouri side, we left some freight, and left also the shore of the state of Missouri. We now had on one side Iowa, and on the other Illinois, and I could not help thinking that there was a great difference between the appearance of every thing,—the houses, the barns, and the fields in the free states, and similar objects in the slave states. It may be all imagination; but I have less philanthropy and less pretension than some other people, and yet I think that I have seen more frugality, more attention to the interest of the proprietors of the land by the laborers employed, more economy and more industry displayed by all parties,—the men, the women, the children, the hired, the hirer, the owner, and the tenant—in free states, than

I have ever seen in slave states. The Western people are not as frugal as their Eastern friends, of either time or money. Every thing in this country grows so fast that a farmer can afford to idle away many hours that a Massachusetts man, or any New-England man, would be obliged to spend in toil and labor—the consequence is that he grows indolent. The Yankee who comes out to the West with the best principles and the most industrious habits, in a short time becomes rather careless of many of the niceties which he would have insisted upon at home. Still, you can always tell the farm of a Yankee settler. You can see that there is a difference between the thriftiness, and the care of buildings of a New-England emigrant, and those of a family who came into this country from the South, particularly from a slave state.

At Keokuk, the next stopping place above Clarksville, we were obliged to discharge all our freight into lighters, as the waters of the Mississippi are falling, and it is rather difficult for any boat to pass over the rapids, which extend from this place to Montrose, a distance of about twelve miles. We staid at Keokuk about fifteen hours, and then, drawing only thirty-three and a half inches, the *Kentucky* had hard work to get over the rapids. She struck and struggled and rubbed on the rocks, her engines were put to their hardest work, the passengers and the crew were obliged to go from side to side every few minutes, in order, by their weight, to up her one way or the other. Finally, she pressed herself along, the steam belching and bellowing, snorting and wheezing, as nothing in this world except the steam of a high-pressure engine can do, and we were again safe in deeper water. While we lay at Keokuk, I took some trouble to see what sort of a place it is, but I was not much gratified. It must be eventually a great place, as it is at the foot of the rapids, and will be the headquarters of all the Southern produce which is to come up the river. It is now rather below par, as there is some dispute as to the title to lands, the Indians having sold out their rights to several companies, and squatters having come in and made use



of lands that belong of right to other people. Pettifogging lawyers and greedy speculators serve to keep up the impression that no good titles can be obtained, and the consequence is that many persons, who might otherwise be disposed to purchase and settle at Keokuk, are deterred from doing so.

A circus company was performing here this afternoon; and for the purpose of seeing the people of the country, I went to their tent, at the expense of fifty cents. There were about six hundred people present, of all ages, sizes and descriptions, mostly women and children, with a slight sprinkling of a country dandy or so, and it was amusing to witness their expressions of feeling at the performances. So far as the circus company was concerned, the performances were the poorest I ever saw, and the horses and the band appeared to be about equally stupid; but the audience was not only a delighted, but a delightful one—every body was happy, and every body was astonished; the clown could not make too stupid a joke, and the man who turned three summersets was pronounced the wonder of the age. How easy and how cheap it is to make people happy!

I forgot to mention, in its proper place in my narrative, that we arrived at Quincy, in the state of Illinois, a town of much importance, at night, after all reasonable people had gone to bed. It was quite a disappointment to me, as I wished to see Quincy, and learn more of its trade and capabilities than I can learn without some personal examination. Soon after we again started; about two miles from the levee, the boat ran upon a sand-bar, and it took two hours of hard work, much scolding and considerable straining of the engines, to get us off. We did float, however, and sailed along up river for about two miles further, when we were obliged to come to a stand still, in consequence of the pumps being choked with sand, so that they would not feed the boilers. This was in consequence of the wheels having stirred up the bottom of the river while we were on the bar, so as to make the water all muddy and thick. Another delay of five or six hours then took place, after which we started again and arrived safely at Keokuk.

## NAUVOO, ILLINOIS

The Holy City of the Mormons has always possessed a certain kind of interest in my mind, and I have had much curiosity to know something about it. But I never expected to spend a whole day in it. Newspaper accounts are generally unsatisfactory, and the events of the last two years have raised up a strong party in opposition to the Mormons, so that it has been almost impossible to learn any thing as to the past or present situation of Nauvoo.<sup>38</sup> The city is situated on the left bank of the Mississippi, in the state of Illinois, on a lot of land gently and gradually sloping down to the water, but extending back over a prairie some two or three or more miles. It has had eighteen thousand inhabitants; it now has eighteen hundred, or at most, two thousand. It appears to have been laid out by somebody, originally, into streets running in squares, and each house is built with regard to the original plan. The families have erected each one their house on their own lot, and of course the dwellings are not compact, but are scattered over a large extent of ground. There is but one block of dwellings, or stores, in the whole city, and that appears to have been left unfinished. Most of them are of brick, two stories and a half high, and square, with a gable roof. There are, however, a number of buildings of wood, and some of them three stories high. Time was, and that not two years and a half ago, when every house was full, and every farm under good cultivation. Now, every thing looks forlorn and desolate. Not half the buildings are occupied, and of these not half are half full. The stores are closed. The farms are running to waste. The streets are overgrown with grass. The inhabitants

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<sup>38</sup> The Mormons founded Nauvoo in 1838. In 1840, they voted the Whig ticket, in recognition of which the Whig legislature granted Nauvoo a charter of unlimited power. Opposition to the Mormons' political power, their practice of polygamy, the arrogance of their leaders, culminating in the destruction of the *Expositor*, an anti-Mormon newspaper in Nauvoo, brought the imprisonment of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in the jail at Carthage, Illinois. Here the brothers were murdered. Brigham Young then became the leader of the church. In January, 1845, the charter was repealed, and in February, 1846, the great trek of the Mormons to Utah began.

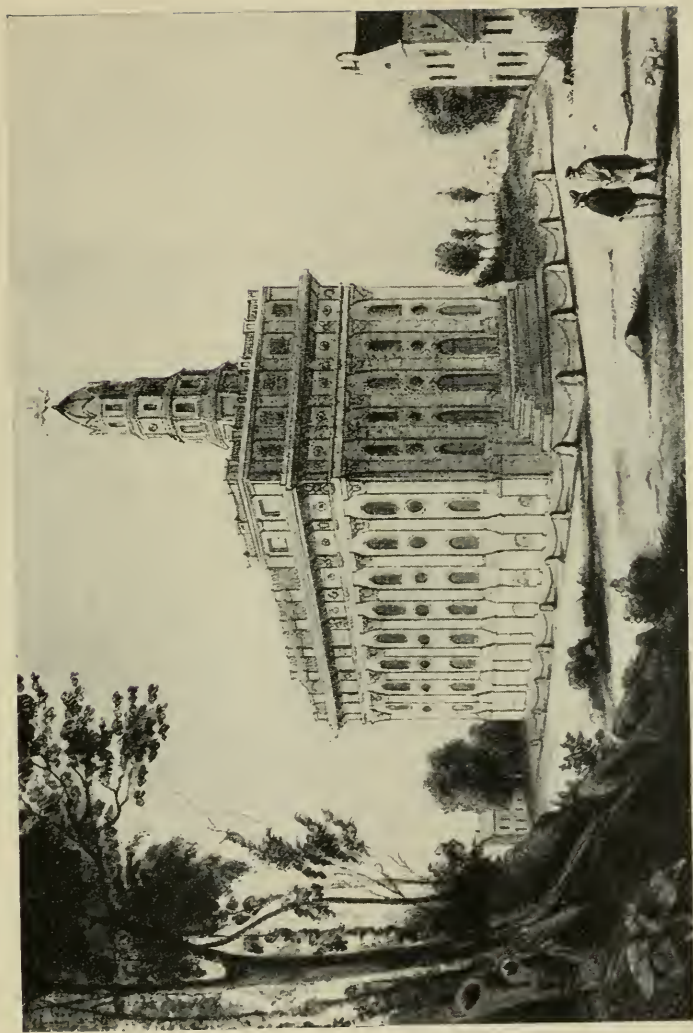
look like any thing but an industrious people, and every thing tells of ruin instead of prosperity.

Our first object, of course, was the far-famed Mormon temple,<sup>39</sup> which stands upon the top of the hill, and can be seen for some miles up and down the river. The first sight we had of it gave us a pang of disappointment, for it looked more like a white Yankee meeting-house, with its steeple on one end, than a magnificent structure which had cost, all uncompleted as it is, seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. But as we approached nearer, it proved to be something worth seeing. It is nearly a mile from the landing, the most conspicuous, in fact the only conspicuous object in the city. It is built of white limestone. The front is ornamented with sunken square columns of no particular style of architecture, having capitals representing half a man's head—the upper half—showing the forehead, eyes and the top of the nose, and crowned with thorns, or perhaps what was intended for the points of stars. Over the head are two bugles or horns, with their largest ends outwards, and the handles, on the upper side, forming a sort of festoon protection. On all sides of the temple are similar columns with similar capitals; the base of each column is heavy, but in good proportion and of a fanciful design, which it would be difficult to describe. There is a basement with small windows. Ten steps lead to the front and only entrance to the main building. Three arches enable you to enter into a sort of vestibule, from which, by doors, you enter the grand hall, and at the sides are the entries to the staircases, to ascend to the upper apartments.

The front of the temple is apparently three stories high, and is surmounted by an octagonal tower or steeple, which itself is three stories, with a dome, and having on four sides a clock next below the dome. There is a line of circular windows over the arched entrance, ornamented with carved work between each, and

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<sup>39</sup> The cornerstone of the Temple was laid on April 6, 1841, in the presence of 10,000 people. The Temple was destroyed by fire of unknown origin in November, 1848.



MORMON TEMPLE, NAUVOO  
From a lithograph in H. Lewis, *Das Illustrierte Mississippithal*.





over that again a line of square windows. In this upper row is a large square entablature, on which is cut the following inscription:—

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD  
*built by*  
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER DAY SAINTS,  
*Commenced April 6th, 1841.*  
HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

A similar entablature is on the front [*illegible*] vestibule, over the doors of entrance, with the same inscription. The letters on each are gilt.

The man in attendance demanded twenty-five cents each as fee for showing us the Temple, and asked every one to subscribe a visitor's book. I looked over this book, and saw but two names of persons hailing from Boston for the last six months, neither of which was familiar to me. We were then taken to the very top of the building, and enjoyed there, for some time, a view of the surrounding country, which, of itself, well paid for the trouble of ascending, as the whole valley of the Mississippi for miles and miles lay exposed to view on the north and south, while the prairie lands of Illinois, and Iowa, and Missouri, were to be seen at the east and west, overlooking the few hills lying near to the shore in the latter state, and showing the tortuous course of the Des Moines river for some distance.

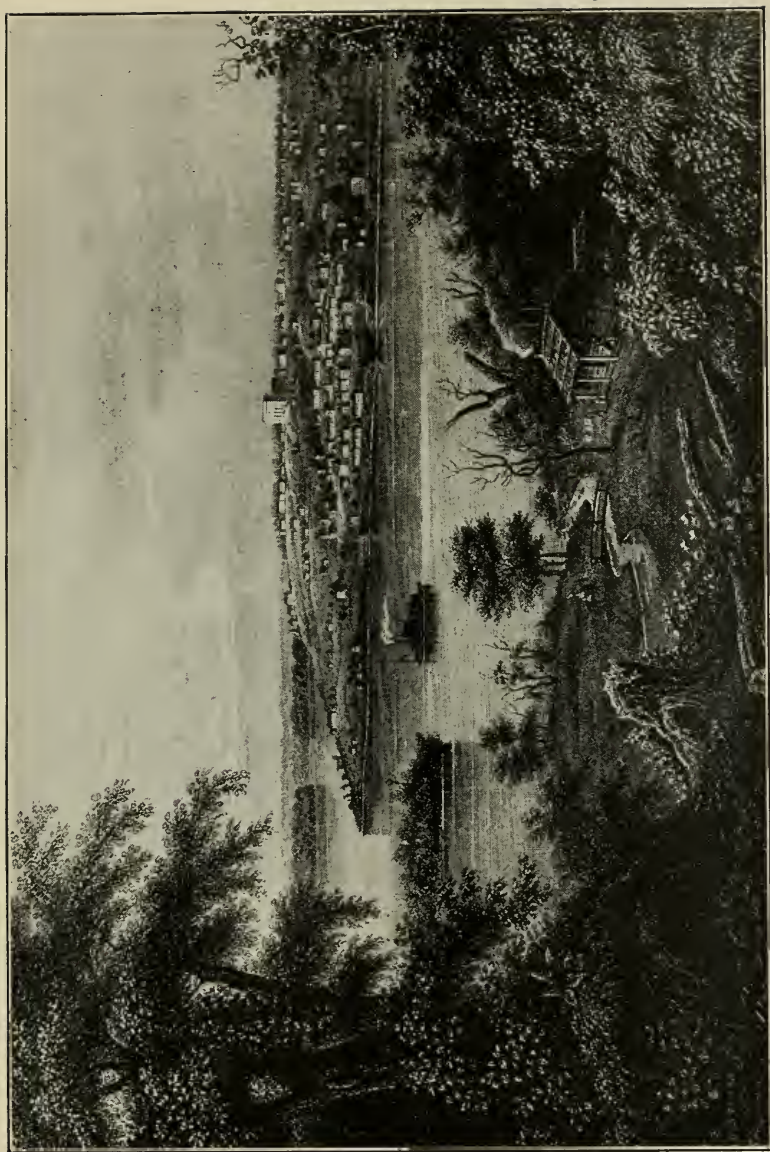
Coming down, we were ushered into the Council Chamber, which is a large low room, lighted by one large half circular window at the end, and several small sky-lights in the roof. On each side are six small ante-chambers, said to have been intended for the twelve priests, councillors, or elders, or whatever they may have been called. The chamber itself is devoid of ornament, and I was unable to ascertain whether it was intended to have any, if it should have been completed.

In the entry, on each side of the door to the Council Chamber, is a room called the wardrobe, where the priests were to keep

their dresses. On one side was a room intended for a pantry, showing that the priests did not mean to go supperless to bed. Under the Council Chamber was another large hall, with seven windows on each side, and four at the further end.

On the lower floor was the grand hall for the assemblage and worship of the people. Over the windows at the end, was inscribed in gilded capital letters—"THE LORD HAS BEHELD OUR SACRIFICE: COME AFTER US." This was in a circular line, corresponding to the circle of the ceiling. Seats are provided in this hall for the accommodation at one time of thirty-five hundred people, and they are arranged with backs, which are fitted like the backs to seats in a modern railroad car, so as to allow the spectator to sit and look in either direction, east or west. At the east and west ends are raised platforms, composed of series of pulpits, on steps one above the other. The fronts of these pulpits were semi-circular, and are inscribed, in gilded letters, on the west side, P A P, P P Q, P T Q, P D Q, meaning, as the guide informed us, the uppermost one, President of Aronic Priesthood; the second, President of the Priests' Quorum; the third, President of the Teachers' Quorum; and the fourth and lowest, President of the Deacons' Quorum. On the east side, the pulpits were marked P H P, P S Z, P H Q, and P E Q, and the knowledge of the guide was no better than ours as to what these symbolical letters were intended for. Like the rooms above, this was devoid of any but architectural ornaments.

We next descended to the basement, where is the far-celebrated font. It is in fact the cellar of the building. The font is of white lime-stone, of an oval shape, twelve by sixteen feet in size on the inside, and about four and a half feet to five feet deep. It is very plain, and rests on the backs of twelve stone oxen or cows, which stand immersed to their knees in the earth. It has two flights of steps, with iron banisters, by which you enter and go out of the font, one at the east end, and the other at the west end. The oxen have tin horns and tin ears, but are otherwise of stone, and a stone drapery hangs like a curtain



Nauvoo  
From an engraving made about 1846.



down from the font, so as to prevent the exposure of all back of the four legs of the beasts. In consequence of what I had heard of this font, I was disappointed; for it was neither vast nor gorgeous; every thing about it was quite simple and unostentatious. The basement is unpaved, and on each side and at the ends are small alcoves, intended for robing rooms for the faithful.

I don't know as I have been able to give an intelligent description of this far-famed temple of the Mormons, but it is correct as far as it goes. The whole is quite unfinished, and one can imagine what it might have been in the course of time, if Joe Smith had been allowed to pursue his career in prosperity.

After wandering about Nauvoo for some time, a small party concluded we would call on the widow of Joe Smith, the prophet, and dine with her—she now keeps a public house, at the sign of the "Nauvoo Mansion." We found her at home, and had considerable conversation with her. She is an intelligent woman, apparently about fifty years of age, rather large, and very good looking, with a bright sparkling eye, but a countenance of sadness when she is not talking; she must have been a handsome woman when some years younger. She answered all our questions as we sat at dinner, although perhaps some of them might have been rather impertinent under a strict construction of the rules of etiquette, with great readiness and great willingness. Our dinner consisted of fresh fried fish and stewed mutton, with vegetables and pastry, to all of which we did full justice, for it was well cooked and cleanly served. After obtaining considerable information, and fully gratifying a not altogether useless curiosity, we separated, highly pleased with our visit.

If any body should wish to go [to] Nauvoo, after this, we advise the taking of a skiff or a row-boat, from a steamboat, and crossing the river from Montrose, which is on the Iowa side directly opposite, rather than put up with the delays, the impudence, and the imposition, which are sure to be encountered by the fellow that manages the regular ferry boat. We advise, also, all strangers to walk over the city, rather than accept of any of the different



conveyances for riding, that may be offered on landing. If the drivers or the ferryman insult you, let them know that you are at once able and ready to chastise their insolence on the spot, for if they think you are too tame, they will not cease their impertinences otherwise, from the time you start from the Iowa territory until you get back again.

The history of the rise and progress of the Mormon delusion, of the causes of their downfall, and the means of their extermination—for they are now as a race exterminated—will be, if it should ever be written, a romance of thrilling interest. No one can visit Nauvoo, and come away without a conviction that whatever of rascality and crime there may have been among them, the body of the Mormons were an industrious, hard-working, and frugal people. In the history of the world there cannot be found such another instance of so rapid a rise of a city out of a wilderness—a city so well built, a territory so well cultivated. That they had bad men and bad women among them, is not to be doubted nor denied; but if the authorities of Illinois had acted in good faith,—if Governor Ford had had firmness and moral courage enough to do his duty and sustain the laws, which he pretended, and, I believe, intended to sustain, the race would not have been driven away by mobs to die of starvation, and disease, and of grief. A few are left at Nauvoo, and those are too poor to live honestly, too broken-hearted to work earnestly.

Joe Smith, the prophet-leader, was, although an uneducated man, a man of great powers, and a man who could conceive great projects. One of his errors was the meddling in the politics of the state and country, and by alternately throwing the weight of the Mormon vote in favor of first one political party and then of another, he raised up enemies, who afterwards became embittered towards him, and when he was suspected of moral crimes, such as tampering with justice, projecting robberies, assisting at burglaries, &c. &c., he not only had no friends left out of his own sect, but became a sort of outlaw, against whom it was apparently a virtue for every man to raise his hand; for whom,

when he died the death of a dog, by downright murder, no one had pity, and whose cause no one dared avenge.

#### GALENA, ILLINOIS

We made very good progress after we left Montrose, which is a town of not much importance, on the Iowa side of the river, opposite Nauvoo. The captains of the steamboats seem to think that the inhabitants of Iowa, in this section of the state, are not worth much, and they give Keokuk and Montrose a bad name for thievery and all other sorts of rascality; they are obliged, when the river is low, to spend much time at both places. We discharged all our freight at Keokuk into lighters, which were drawn up, for thirteen miles, over the rapids, by horse-power. There is no tow-path, but the water is so shallow that the horses wade along on the Iowa side, sometimes up to their bellies in the water, and occasionally on the shore, where there is a clear path along the beach, finding a dry passage. Our master of the *Kentucky* entrusted his freight to two lighters, but he put his first clerk on board of one and a trusty man on board the other, to protect the property from thieves, with whom it was possible the lightermen might be in connection, either directly or indirectly.

The scenery on the river is pretty, but it is not particularly striking, and we occasionally met with large rafts of timber, &c., floating down. These rafts are very large, and have crews of from five to twenty men, according to their size;—they have four or six large sculls put out at each end, for the purpose of steering or warping them over to the different sides of the river, according to circumstances and the course of the channel. Sometimes they get hard and fast, while going over the rapids or over the sand-bars, and as they have no means of getting off again, they pull their rafts in pieces, and, wading in the water, form them again into new rafts, on the lower side of the shoals where they have run aground. We stopped during the next night after we left the rapids, to take in wood, and the scene was one of the most picturesque I ever saw. Large pine knots were stuck up on end on board the boat and on shore, and lighted so as to make torches.

As no pine is to be had in this part of the country, these torches are manufactured for the purpose, by binding together several sticks of long wood, which the steamboat people obtain at St. Louis from the boats which arrive at that place from New-Orleans and other directions. At the spot where we stopped to wood this night, the lights and the dark shade of the trees, the half savage appearance of the woodmen, and the glare of light on the placid water of the Mississippi, made every thing appear quite romantic.

About daylight, we arrived at Burlington, which is a pretty place of some importance and considerable trade. I regretted that for the two hours we were there, I could not meet with some friends who had expected to show me some of the advantages of the town, but it would have been cruel to call upon them at so early an hour in the morning. Every thing wore the appearance, in the early twilight, of peace and comfort, and the store-houses and shops evinced a prosperity which it is to be hoped will be increased with the increase of time,—the progress of civilization. Only eighteen years ago, this place was but a wilderness, and now it is a thriving, industrious and growing place of business.

The most beautiful,—not the most grand and romantic, but the most strikingly pretty—scenery, is still further up the river, where are situated on the opposite sides, the towns of Davenport in Iowa, and Stephenson in Illinois.<sup>40</sup> We landed freight and passengers at both places, and I don't know which to describe as the most pleasant. Both are generally built of good substantial brick and wooden houses and stores. The situation of Davenport appears the prettiest as you look up the river upon it, and that of Stephenson the prettiest as you go up stream and look down river to it. Davenport, however, is the place of most business at present. Between the two towns is the island called Rock Island, where is a fort which was the scene of a hard contested battle with the British, in the war of 1812,<sup>41</sup> and where Colonel Daven-

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<sup>40</sup> The name Stephenson was officially changed to Rock Island in March, 1841.

<sup>41</sup> Fort Armstrong was established at the lower end of Rock Island after the close of the War of 1812. Its garrison was withdrawn in 1836.

port was murdered a few years ago by a parcel of horse-thieves, for the sake of his money. The fort is deserted at present, and the public works are not in good preservation. The farm and farm-house of Col. Davenport on the island exhibit evidences of care, and are in good order. It will be recollected by some readers of the newspapers that Col. Davenport was alone in his house on one 4th of July, and he was attacked, murdered, and robbed of about two thousand dollars by several men, three or four of whom were afterwards caught and hung for the crime.<sup>42</sup> He was a singular man in his character, and was divorced from his wife; he afterwards married his wife's daughter, and the two wives or widows now live on the estate together.

We arrived at Galena about eleven o'clock in the forenoon on Saturday, and found it a much larger, much more of a business place than we expected. The principal street runs along the bank of the river up into a valley, and houses are scattered along on the banks of the hills for some miles. This town is situated about seven miles from the Mississippi, on a shallow winding stream, called Fever River. The river runs in all sorts of directions, and is very crooked,—sometimes to the south, sometimes to the east, sometimes west, and sometimes almost north again. At some seasons of the year it is not navigable, except for rafts or very light flat-boats, and about a mile from the village it is fordable at almost all seasons by cattle and persons on foot. Two ferries are maintained by the town, and the village is situated in a valley on both sides of the river.

Our general impression of Galena is, that it is a rough mining town, with hardly any civilization, and no business, except that which naturally grows out of the wants of the miners. But it is a place of much trade, and the centre of what will by and by be a great agricultural country. The hills and fields are favorable for the growth of wheat, and the raising of cattle. A few years ago it

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<sup>42</sup> Col. George Davenport, born in England, came to America and entered into trade with the Indians. He had lived on Rock Island for some thirty years, acquiring a fortune and a reputation among Indians and whites for his fairness, generosity and kindness to all.



was in reality a wilderness, but now it has a large number of stores, and several meeting-houses, good, substantial, fashionable looking dwelling-houses, and about a dozen good taverns, besides a dozen dashing-looking bar-rooms. The progress of civilization and the great increase of travel has induced farmers to settle in the town, and turn their attention to raising vegetables, fruit and poultry for market, for which they get good prices.

As this is *the* lead region of the United States, from which so much wealth has already been accumulated, I was anxious to visit the mines. On the levee were piled up large piles of lead in pigs, which were going on board several steamers, or waiting for opportunities for shipment to St. Louis. Procuring a guide, I started, after dinner, for the "diggings" and the furnaces. The country is composed of small hills and valleys, and on almost every mound we saw the yellow earth turned up in piles, showing where the miners had been at work. Being Saturday afternoon, few persons were engaged in the operation of digging, but I saw several holes where the men were hoisting with a common windlass the ore and earth from little wells. The land in this neighborhood has all been entered and become private property. The owners have no objection to any one coming on their land and digging for lead. If the operators succeed in striking a vein, they make a bargain with the owner to get out as much as they can, giving him a certain portion—the lion's share, of course—and receiving the rest for their own labor; if they are not successful, they abandon the work, and commence in another part of the lot, no harm having been done, except their own loss of time and money. Some laborers make a great deal by this operation, while others only get about enough to pay them their outfit and day's wages, while the owner is sure to become rich by their labor.

Lead is a cash article, and is worth money the moment it is brought to the surface of the earth. There is no credit system allowed, for it sells for cash, and although not so valuable in market as silver or gold, is quite as readily turned into those commodities, or into bank bills. There are in the neighborhood several smelting







houses or furnaces. The ore is so pure that it requires little working to make it into pigs. In the furnaces there is no puddling, as there is with iron. The fire is built of charcoal, or wood, or both, and the earth thrown into the furnace; as it melts, the ore runs out as pure as silver itself, from the mouth, into a pot in front, from which it is scooped up in its liquid state and poured into moulds, from which it is taken as soon as it becomes cool or hardened, and thrown into wagons, to be transported to the river side. It appears to be the most easy and the most rapidly transformed metal in the world. A large lot of dark blue earth, sometimes in large lumps and sometimes apparently nothing but sand, is shoveled into the fire, and it runs out pure lead, in a moment. There is a considerable quantity of dross taken out of the furnaces, from time to time, but it is not thrown away,—for that, in its turn, is again subjected to the heat in a differently constructed furnace, and yields, although not so plentifully, not so rapidly, a large quantity of the precious metal. At one furnace I saw ore, or earth, as I should call it, which yielded ninety-five per cent of pure lead, and dross which, it was said, would yield twenty to twenty-five per cent more after going through the second process.

#### CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Back again! This may be called the first mile-stone on my road home. When I left Boston, I had no intention of coming to Chicago; and when I came to Chicago, I had no expectation or intention of going any further West or South; but every day's experience proves that all human calculations are in vain, as has been said and proved millions of times before; and I am sure that it is best for us not to know "what a day may bring forth." I have seen a much larger portion of the state of Illinois than travelers for mere business or pleasure would be likely to see in a hundred journeys, as my wanderings have not been confined to the regular stage routes, nor to the direct roads from far-off points to far-off points. I have walked, and I have sailed, and I have rode, over farms, and prairies, and rivers, and on lakes;—I have not only met with all sorts of people, made acquaintance with

all sorts of men, women and children, but I have fallen in with all sorts of relations. I traveled seven days with a gentleman who helped me to ravel out a tangled string of genealogy, and we found at last that we were actually relations;—it was in this wise: His wife was the daughter of a second cousin to my father's grandmother, on the mother's side, and as her maiden name was the same as one of my three names, it must be that we were, in this extensive country, quite near relations; besides this, and to make the connection still more intimate, one of her nephews is a clergyman in Boston, of whose church many of my relatives are members. *Par consequence*, as they say in France, we became quite intimate. Unfortunately, although my far-off relative is reputed to be rich, he has children to inherit his property, and there are so many between him and me, that I have no chance of gaining any pecuniary advantage by the discovery.

Again, I was agreeably surprised, at a town where I had no acquaintances, by a gentleman who introduced himself, after seeing my name on the books at the hotel, as the brother-in-law to the brother-in-law of one of my connections, and I was not only pleased to make his acquaintance, but I received much benefit from the circumstance. Who would not have relations? And yet some men I have met with, are continually complaining that they have too many, because they cannot, in consequence of their relations, be as independent as they please.

A party of seven contracted at Galena for a stage coach with nine seats to take us to Chicago, with the understanding that no one else was to enter or to ride on the coach. We traveled by what is called the lower route, through Dixon, Mount Carroll, across the Winnebago Swamp, the Big Rock, the Little Rock, the Fox River, &c., a distance of about one hundred and seventy-five miles. The country is not as interesting as that of the more Southern part of the state, because the prairies are not so extensively cultivated—there is more waste land; and because the crops, it being in a higher latitude, are not so far advanced. For the first ten miles from Galena we passed hills where there had been

hundreds of "diggings," as they are called, for lead, many of which have been successful. Mount Carroll is a thriving village, with considerable water power, and a number of mills. At Dixon, which is a town of considerable pretension, as well as a county site, with a courthouse, we had a miserable breakfast, after a long and tedious night's ride; the place seems to be prolific in nothing but grocery stores and lawyer's offices.

The prettiest town we passed through was Aurora, on the Fox River, and I was disappointed that we arrived too late in the evening to make a more thorough examination into its resources and its advantages. Only nine years ago the country around this village was almost unsettled. At La Fox, as it was then called—now Geneva—were a few families, and within the circuit of perhaps fifteen miles there only lived about twenty families in the whole; now, in that same circuit there are six villages, with an average population of sixteen hundred inhabitants in each! The water-power on the Fox River is great, particularly for the Western country, and every day is adding to the wealth of those who settled in its valley a few short years ago.

After a ride of two days and two nights we arrived at Chicago. We had fared better than I have fared on some other routes, and we ought to have done so, for the expense was higher; but the journey was a very tedious one, and I was glad to find myself once more in a comfortable bed, and undressed. There is nothing rests a man so much as undressing and getting between a pair of sheets, no matter if it be only for half an hour. Those who have travelled much,—and, as they say in the West, I have travelled some during the last twenty years,—know this, and always act on their knowledge when they can get an opportunity.

We found Chicago the same interesting, busy, bustling place it was some weeks ago. The Convention and the traces of the Convention are gone, but there is nothing, it would seem, can deprive the city of its prosperity, its increase, its enterprise. Boats arrive and depart, produce comes in, and goods from the East are imported. The people are industrious, and the people



multiply almost beyond belief, and the people must thrive. A gentleman told me to-day that only about ten years ago he had on his hands a lot of Eastern land, which, during the times of speculation, he had taken up as other men did at that time, with the expectation of making a fortune out of it; of course it fell in value, and he considered it almost valueless. One day a stranger entered his office in Boston, and offered, nay entreated, to swap a few lots on the Skunk River in Chicago, for his Eastern land. My friend asked, in his ignorance, where Chicago was, and had to look for some time on the map before he could find it. Finally he contemptuously rejected the idea of throwing away even worthless lands in Maine for these lots in the West. He has since sold his Eastern land for less than five hundred dollars, and now that he has moved out to Chicago, finds that the despised lots which he was offered in exchange for them are almost in the centre of business, and cannot be purchased of the present owners for twenty thousand dollars.

Chicago is the capital or shire town of Cook county. An artificial harbor has been made by building out into the lake two long piers from the mouth of the river, but even now a dredging machine is needed to keep the entrance open sufficiently to allow heavy loaded vessels to enter at all times, and all seasons, and all weathers. This will be remedied in time. Every thing cannot be done in a day, although it appears as if every thing would grow in a day in this country. Sand bars will grow, and so will trees, and wheat, and corn, and pigs, and cattle, and babies, but it appears that some things grow faster than they can be stunted.

#### CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Before I leave this place for the East, I must put down a few matters relating to the great West, that I believe have escaped notice in other pages of my diary. The *Great West* is a term that I use in reference to that part of it which I have seen, but they tell me I have as yet seen nothing at all of it. Travelers who return from a voyage to any place whatever, whether it be in America or Europe, the East or West Indies, are always sure

to be asked, on their return, if they have visited such or such a spot—have been to such or such a city. If the reply is in the negative, they are sure to be told by some one that has, by accident, seen something that they have not seen, that they "*ought to have gone there;*" and the superior advantage of the traveled gentleman who has, by accident, been thrown in the way of some hitherto unknown curiosity, or unexplored section, is, in his own estimation at least, raised almost immeasurably. I have experienced this many times before, and expect to experience it again on my return, receiving the commiserating looks, if not the more directly expressed pity, of those who have preceded me in their visits to this part of the country.

Before I left St. Louis, a gentleman advised me not to return to Boston without visiting the West! I told him that I was as far West as I thought proper to go at the present time. But he turned up his eyes in wonder at my ignorance, and said, with all the seriousness imaginable, that I had not yet commenced my travels to the West! On considering all the circumstances, I am inclined to think that he was more than half right. If this country goes on increasing in wealth and population a few years longer, the city of St. Louis will be nearly the centre, and we shall have to speak of New-England as the far off *great East*, in the same way that it is customary now all over the country, to speak of Missouri and Iowa, and other now almost unexplored regions, as the *great West*. One becomes lost in wonder in speculating on this subject, and cannot even imagine to what an extent of greatness we may arrive before the expiration of another fifty years. Now the wealth and the power are on the sea-board—the Atlantic sea-board—and the cities of Boston, New-York, Philadelphia and Baltimore on that coast are metropolitan cities; but in that time they are destined to become provincial cities. The one great metropolis of the country, the centre of the wealth and the population and the power of the country, will be on the west bank of the Mississippi river, if not even further off than that. Arguing on these premises, I have not, as my friend said, yet commenced my travels to the West.

I forgot what or how much I have said of the Mississippi river, but I was reminded today, on seeing Banvard's advertisement in a Boston paper, of his "three mile picture," of the wonder with which I listened to his description of its tortuosity.<sup>43</sup> He told us what we all knew before of its crooked channel—we could see by the map that it was crooked,—and I believe he told us of the number of times a boat was often obliged, in the course of a few miles, to cross directly from one point to another. I thought at the time that he might be telling rather an extravagant story, which might be excusable in one who was publicly exhibiting a picture on which he had expended so much time and labor. But now I am satisfied that he did not tell one half of what he might have told. What the navigation may be below St. Louis, I am not able to testify to, but I am sure that no vessel in head wind ever sailed more miles to beat up one, than I sailed in the steamer *Kentucky*, a few days ago, to get half a mile up stream. At times, we shot across to the left bank to within a few feet, hardly leaving us room to turn, and then went directly back again to within a few feet of the bank on the opposite side. Sometimes, by this crossing and re-crossing, we gained a little, and once, I believe, the channel was so twisted, that when we were on the right we were actually lower down the river than we were a short time before when over on the left. This was owing to the shallowness of the river and the sand-bars.

The sand-bars in the Mississippi are continually shifting, and a pilot who does not constantly travel over the route is very apt to become unfitted for his business, and not by any fault of his own. Once we ran upon a sand-bar, which the captain said did not exist when he came down on his last trip. While the mate and engineer were getting the steamer off, the Captain and Pilot took a small boat and went out to take soundings, and find the channel; having found it, they planted buoys for the benefit of whoever might come after them, but without much hope that they would

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<sup>43</sup> Banvard's panorama was a "magnificent unwinding depicting of the Father of Waters with the scenery along the banks from New Orleans to St. Louis, with all the accompanying incidents of trade and navigation."

be of service for many days. This fact shows the necessity for some action of the national government respecting the Western waters. It is supposed that with a comparatively trifling expense, a clear channel might be kept open all the season, that would allow of much more rapid and safer communication than we now have.

Travelers in the Western country—that is, the West of to-day, do not experience all the inconveniences nor meet with all the amusing incidents that were to be met with some years ago. The country is not so wild, nor are the people so unsophisticated as they were only as lately as 1832; there has been so much immigration that a certain degree of civilization has been attained in the country towns, and to a certain extent some luxuries may be found every where. But the whole people in the interior of Illinois are in a sort of transition state—between rude unsophisticated life and civilized comfort. Almost every where, I found the people had a plenty of ice, which is a luxury to every body, and a necessary article to those of us who have always been accustomed to it. I believe I have already spoken of the want of good taverns on the stage roads, but I have said nothing of the funny incidents which used to take place at log houses, where people slept all in one room, some on beds, some in blankets on the floor, and some on buffalo skins; because no such things came under my notice. But I have seen taverns, first rate taverns too, they were called, where there were four or five beds in the one solitary bed-room,—all double beds, as a single bed would be a luxury not dreamed of at present in those regions—where men, and women, and children are obliged, even at this day, to be all accommodated at once.

The nearest approach to any thing like trouble that I met with, was at a tavern in quite a considerable town in this state, where, after I had got comfortably into bed, one night, the landlord insisted upon my taking in as a companion, a stranger, to sleep with me. I refused, and he said it must be so. I told him I never yet had slept in the same bed with another man, and I never would. The man, too, was determined to come to bed,



and mine was the only one in the house that had not two persons in it. So, rather than have a quarrel, I got up, and taking my great coat, laid down on the floor in the corner of the room, with my carpet bag for a pillow, and slept comfortably for the rest of the night, while the landlord accommodated the stranger on my abdicated straw bed; both probably laughing at and despising my fastidiousness.

I had the impertinence,—I suppose some people will call it so,—to doubt, in a former chapter of my diary, the wisdom of those who advised the spending of a large sum of money to complete the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Further examination has convinced me that those who had the direction of that matter, would have done far better to have turned the Canal into a Railroad. It is said now, that although the Canal is almost finished, it will not hold water after it is filled; for the work is so finished, and the soil is so porous, that the water will *leech* through. If this is the case, the money is thrown away, and a railroad will have to be built, on the same route, in order to accommodate the trade from the interior to Chicago. The projected railroad from Alton to Springfield will be built in the course of two or three years, and our Eastern people will not be long in seeing the advantages of connecting that link of communication with Chicago and the lakes, thus securing to New-England the commerce of all Mississippi north of St. Louis, and consequently all the northern trade of the state of Missouri. A canal cannot do the business, and a railroad could.

The trade of upper Missouri, all of Wisconsin, nearly all of Illinois, as well as the northern part of Indiana, must, by and by, come through the lakes, and at the present time the people have all their sympathies and all their plans connected with the East, and in a great measure with New-England, of which Boston is the great head. Chicago is destined to be a place of great export for all the products of the states named, as soon as our facilities of communication are opened, as they will be, by the completion of the Ogdensburg Railroad. It will also be a place of much im-



portance as the port of reception for much of the merchandise, the manufactured and foreign goods which are to be consumed in the West. I may be thought by some persons a little—perhaps a great deal—in advance of the times, in this my speculation, but as a certain noted politician says, “We shall see.”

I leave this place to-morrow for Buffalo, to go again through the lakes.

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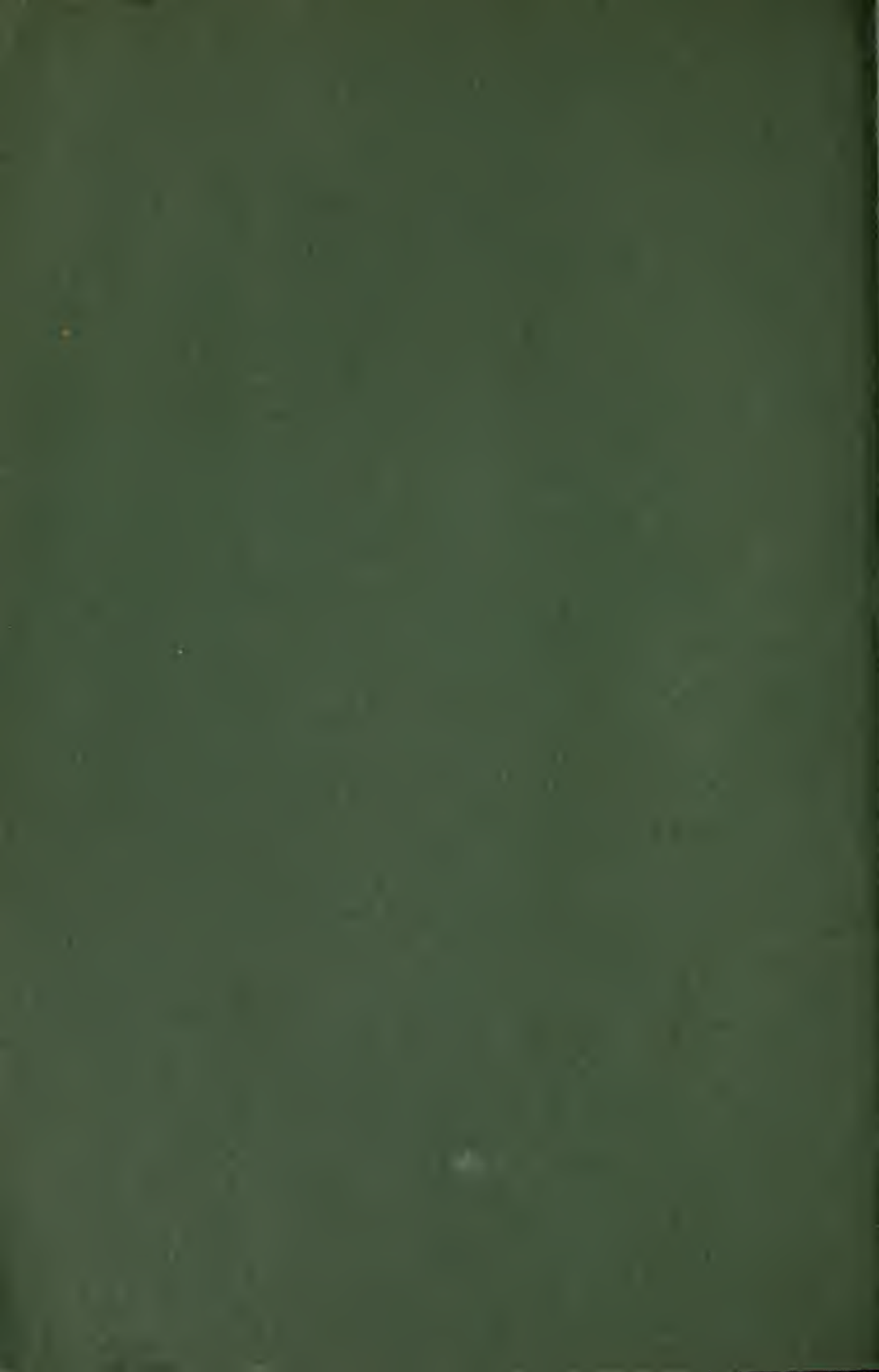
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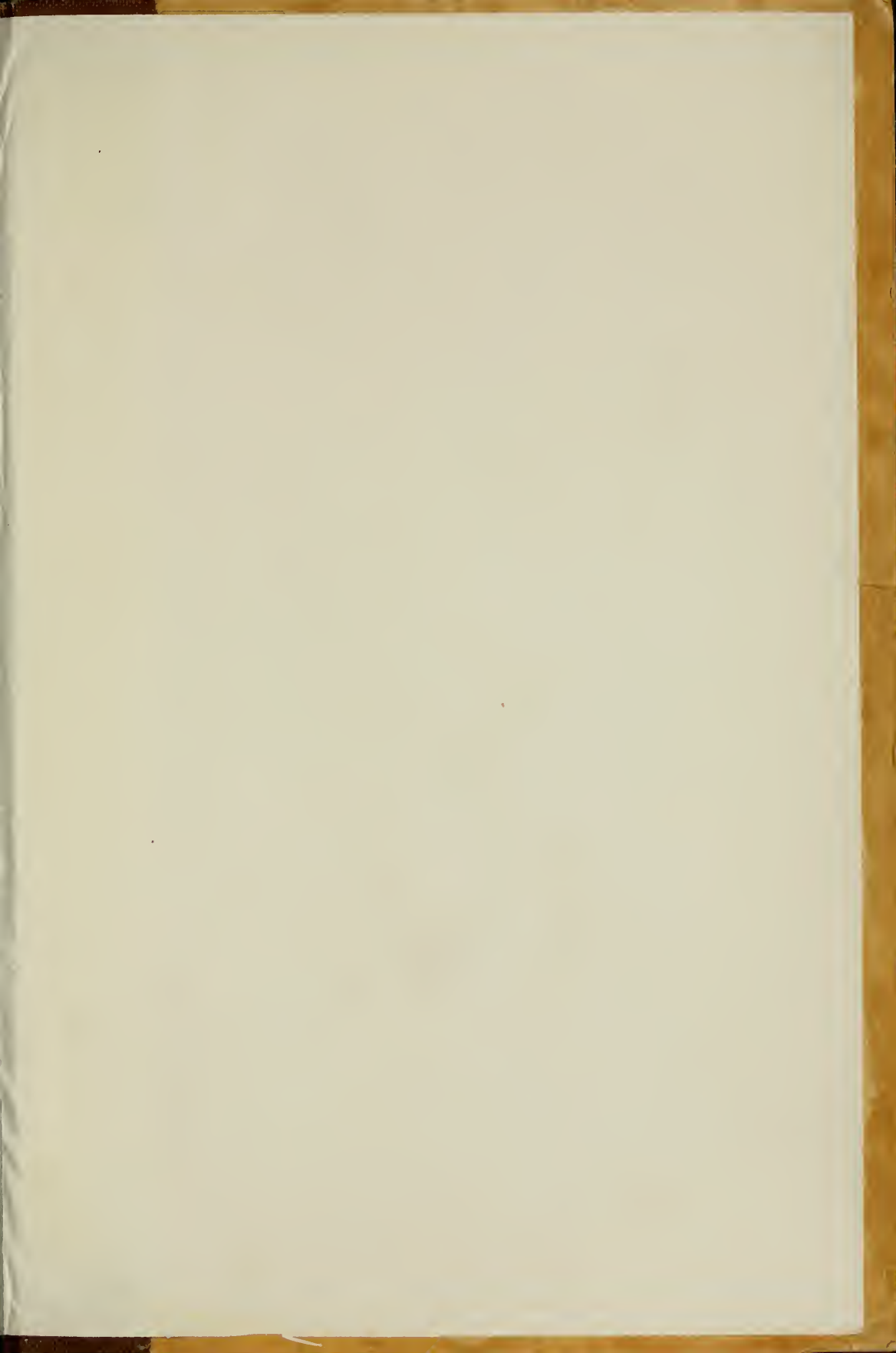






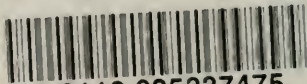






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